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JULY, 1908

# AINSLEES

THE MAGAZIN HAT ENTERTAINS



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Berliner Gramophone Co., Montreal, Canadian Distributors.

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OS' says: "Why eat three meals a day instead of one? Why, in fact, does not the baby's first milk-shake serve for life?

"Why does a repeat order invariably follow the first kiss? (And 999,999,999,999

other 'Whys' on application.)

"Because Duplication is a law of life."

Cos' says: "Why do you have to tell even your brightest clerks the same thing

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"Why does the most carefully built and directly resultful advertisement-the mail-order advertisement—repeat its strongest points, its most important directions. its most persuasive prices, several times?

"Because Duplication is a law of mind."

Cos' says: "A river doesn't cut its channel in a day. Neither does a habit-or an impulse to buy an advertised article.

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"To make the name of your product a 'household word' and its use a 'second nature' with as many of the 57—I should say of the 80,000,000, as possible—these are your aims, this the task you

have set for yourself.

"And your tool is-Duplication. Duplication of your message. Duplication of circulation, that is, cumulative effect on the reader of your message. Cumulative effect. Say that over a few times. Let it soak in. Duplication means cumulative effect. Extensive duplication means great cumulative effect. That it should ever have meant anything less to any intelligent advertiser is one of the most curious facts in the un-natural history of advertising."

Cos' says: "Cosmopolitan and three other great general magazines now have a combined circulation of 2,000,000 copies and a clientele of fully 10,000,000 alert men and women. Moreover, the combined page rate of these four leading publications is less than half that of the one most

conspicuous women's publication.

"Cosmopolitan, alone, goes into 450,000 homes every month and influences the enermous number of 2,225,000 individual readers. 50 per cent. of its circulation consists of paid-in-advance, family subscriptions, it being one of the two great general magazines enjoying this much-desired support.

"There is quite a little duplication in these four circulations—just how much no one knows. For your sake we wish there were much more. Whatever other mediums you use or do not use, for the very life's sake of your business, you should come in and stay in all of these four magazines. And if you are looking for stability—the circulation with the Sterling mark—you'll sign a contract with Cosmopolitan first of all." Straws show which way the lemonade flows. Here's one:

GEO. H. COOPER, Unique Ad-Writer

PITTSFIELD, Mass., May 14, 1908.

COSMOPOLITAN MAGAZINE, New York City.

Gentlemen: I would like to tell you about "An Inch of Cosmopolitan." I began using an inch space in your magazine last January to tell about "Cooperosities," the unique, breezy little ads., that I write for most any kind of business.

I have had a host of answers and a good deal of business therefrom.

Here's a few of the widely different places from which inquiries have come: Petaluma, Cal. Moose Jaw, Sask., Can.

Knox City, Texas. Cork, Ireland. London, Ont. Green Bay, Wis. Flandreau, S. D. Crookston, Minn. Washington, D. C. Seattle, Wash. Douglas, Arizona. Sydney, N. S. Raton, New Mex. Chicago, Ill.

I am greatly pleased with the results of this little inch ad.

Buckingham, Que., Can. St. Louis, Mo. Danville, Que., Can.

Hoxie, Kans.

Frederikstead, St. Croix, West Indies.

GEO. H. COOPER.

For "Cos'," the magazinelet, which is a little bit of reasonableness reasoned out each month—a few days before our advertising forms close—address Advertising Manager, Cosmopolitan Magazine, 2 Duane Street, New York City.



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"In this book is issued the most remarkable piece of fiction the year thus far has brought,"

New York Times Review

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FOR .	J	U	L	Y			•	190	8
Cover Design		•					. Ch. We	ber Ditzler	
An American Pasha. Novelette							. Henry C	. Rowland	1
The Truth. Poem							. Theodosia	a Garrison	67
Buried Treasure. Short Story								O. Henry	68
On a Sun-dial. Poem .							. Torrance	Benjamin	73
Rudolph's Little Playmate. Sho	rt Story						. Mrs. Wilson	Woodrow	74
The Ghost-white Stars. Poem							. William	Struthers	81
A Blackstone of the Bad Lands.	Short	Story	, .				Steel	Williams	8:
The House of Dream, Poem			٠	۰			. Clinto	n Scollard	90
When Heaven Touched the Earth	n. Sho	rt Ste	огу .		٠		Ann	ne Warner	91
Muslin or the Mercedes. Short S	tory						. Torrance	Benjamin	98
Oh, the Summer. Poem .							Isabel Ecclesto	ne Mackay	101
The Immortal Moment. Serial							Ma	y Sinclair	102
The Inexperience of Mrs. Keyser.	Short	Sto	ry .		٠		Jane W	V. Guthrie	127
Babes in the Wilderness. Short	Story	•					. Virg	inia Tracy	133
My Mission. Short Story .			•		٠		Jan	nes Hopper	141
Courage. Poem							Isabel Ecclesto	ne Mackay	146
As They Are. Short Story .	٠				0		. Jeanne	tte Cooper	147
Dawn, and the Night Has Fled.	Poem					٠	. Beth Slate	r Wbitson	150
Plays and Players			0				A Fin	rst Nighter	151
For Book Lovers							Archibald Lowe	ry Sessions	156

YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION \$1.80



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WARNING Do not subscribe through agents unknown to you. Complaints are daily made by persons who have been thus victimized.



#### "Pure Lard" Doesn't Mean Leaf Lard

A lard can be labeled "Pure Lard" even though it is made from various hog fats. Lard made entirely from hog fat is pure lard. Suet and tallow are both beef fats, yet there's a vast difference. There is just as great difference between "Pure Lard" and "Leaf Lard."



#### "Leaf Brand" Doesn't Mean Leaf Lard

Such-and-Such "Leaf Brand" means simply a brand of ordinary lard. It is to leaf lard what skimmed milk is to cream. When a maker gives you real leaf lard, be sure he will say "Leaf Lard" on the label. He will never say "Leaf Brand."

## How to be Sure of Leaf Lard

There is not enough leaf lard produced to supply one-tenth of the people.

It is made from that flaky bit of fat which surrounds the hog's kidneys.

There is plenty of other fat in a hog, but only this trifle of leaf fat.

So it goes only to those who insist on it.

Leaf fat is to other hog fat what beef suet is to tallow. Suet is the kidney fat of beef—leaf, the kidney fat of hogs.

You wouldn't accept tallow if you wanted beef suct.

Be just as sure, when you want leaf lard, that you don't get common lard.

#### Labels Cannot Lie

You can know leaf lard by the label.

Any lard which is Government inspected must be branded correctly. Labels today can't lie.

But be sure that the label says "Leaf Lard"—

"Armour's 'Simon Pure' Leaf Lard."
"Pure Lard" doesn't mean leaf lard. It means

"Pure Lard" doesn't mean leaf lard. It means simply a lard made from various hog fats. "Leaf Brand" doesn't mean leaf lard. It means

simply a brand of common lard.

Be sure that the maker who gives you leaf lard will say "Leaf Lard" on the label.

#### Like Mother's

Some of our mothers, back on the farm, made a lard that we remember. They used only leaf fat. They knew.

Thousands of women say today, "I wish I could get that old-fashioned lard now." But you can get it. It was simply leaf fat, refined in an open kettle.

So is Armour's "Simon Pure." But our open kettles have steam jackets, and we employ infinite skill. So our lard has an exquisite flavor which farm-made lard always lacked.

It pays to be careful, for leaf is the cream of lards.

Leaf lard makes flaky, delicious pastry such as common lard can't make. Leaf lard has the flavor.

It is even most economical, for one needs to use only two-thirds as much. For cooking, it is even better than butter, because it doesn't cook so dry. But you don't get such lard 4 unless you insist on it. You don't get leaf lard from a tub.

The label plainly says:

The only lard which reaches the housewife with U. S. Government seal unbroken.

Sold in air-tight pails—3's, 5's and 10's.

## Armour's "Simon Pure" Leaf Lard

## AINSLEE'S

VOL. XXI.

JULY, 1908.

No. 6.

## AN AMERICAN PASHA



#### CHAPTER I



CK and the Princess Lilear met when both were in the bud. On that occasion Dick was fortunate enough to render her the first service which she had ever received, not as

a princess but as a woman.

It was in Switzerland. Dick was returning from one of his long, solitary rambles, for his mother was an invalid and the boy knew no one in the place. Approaching the auberge from the rear he heard the hideous squawking which a fowl makes when on its way to the guillotine, and boylike hastened to the scene of execution.

A stolid Swiss gripped firmly the sacrifice to man's savage appetites; he forced the beak open, pushed the scissors under the tongue and cut, then looked at the boy and grinned. Dick, realizing the stern necessities of the case, watched the death throes with the cool interest of a savage, or a boy, and was still watching when a slim figure in a gray riding-habit came flying around the corner of the building and stumbled over the shuddering body of the chicken.

"Look out!" called Dick sharply.

A slender little girl with smoke-colored hair and very light, clear gray eyes stopped short and looked at him in a startled way. The chicken heaved convulsively and she glanced down.
"V'at is t'at t'ing?" she asked, in

strongly accented English.

"Chicken," said Dick. "Better keep away; he might spatter you."

The girl did not move and Dick stared, fascinated by the growing horror of her face. The peasant had caught another victim and was forcing open its beak.

Then suddenly she understood, which was odd, for she came from a country where a person would take a troublesome insect and holding it gently place it upon the ground at a distance rather than kill it. Yet she understood, and Dick, still staring, saw the rich color fade from her cheeks, leaving them a pale olive, while her light eyes seemed to grow suddenly dark.

The Swiss raised his sharp scissors: as he did so the girl sprang forward.

"Non! Non! Non! Ne faites pas c'la!" she cried in a deep, gurgling voice. The peasant stared, then grinned, and made the fatal snip. The fowl squawked, and at the same instant the girl flew at the man like a wildcat and lashed him across the head with her riding-whip. Then, as with a howl of pain and astonishment he dropped fowl and scissors, raising both hands to shield himself, she struck him again and again, keen, cruel blows, so maddening the fellow that he lurched toward her snarling in his throat and with his thick fingers spread.

But Dick had already sprung forward to interfere; he saw the danger in the man's blind fury, and, big-boned, strong-muscled boy that he was, planted a blow between the eyes that sent him

to earth quite hors de combat. Dick caught the girl's wrist and dis-

armed her, none too gently.
"That's enough!" said he.

"You leave him alone.

She flung herself forward; to Dick she looked all eyes and hair and white,

flashing teeth.

"How do you dar're?" she panted. "Gif me t'at v'ip!" She positively hissed at him like a cat. "How do you dar're to touch me? I am the Princess Lilear!"

"I don't care if you're the Queen of England," said Dick. "You've got no right to slash a man like that for doing what he's told." He held the whip be-

hind him.

The girl stared; then she looked at the peasant who was sitting on the ground blubbering. A swift change passed over her face; a change which startled Dick even more than her outburst of rage.

"V'y vas he doing t'at? V'y? V'y?" she cried imperiously.

"Well," said Dick, "you can't eat 'em alive, can you? Here-take your whip!" He saw the reaction coming.

But the princess did not seem to see the whip; her eyes were fastened on Dick with a look of horrified intensity.

"Eat t'em!" she cried. "Iss it to

eat t'em?" The look of horror gave way to one of infinite loathing. know!" she cried, as if to challenge contradiction. "I know-but I have never t'ought— Oh, tchk, tchk, tchk!" She made the peculiar clicking sound by which the Turks express emo-The blood rushed into her face. Dick could see that an outburst of some sort was coming.

"Don't cry," he said uncomfortably. "It's beastly, of course, but it's always done; doesn't hurt 'em; it's over so quick; and they're used to it-sort of."

She was not listening. Another lightning change had occurred and she sprang to the side of the peasant, who shrank away.

"V'là!" she cried. "You are an animal-they are all animals-but it v'as not your fault! I am sorry t'at I

beated you! V'là!"

She had drawn a little purse from the pocket of her skirt and was pouring the contents between the man's knees. Dick saw gold coins, louis, ten-franc pieces, and a stream of silver.

"Don't give him all that!" he pro-

The princess turned to him haughtily. "I v'ill gif him v'at I like!" she exclaimed. "I am the Princess Lilear!"

"Well, you may be the Princess Lilear, but you're an awful little goose!" Dick regarded her pityingly, then turned away.

The princess looked at him aslant.

"V'at iss your name?" she asked, and something in the low, rich voice brought the color into the boy's cheeks.

"Dick-I mean, Richard Osborne,"

he answered stiffly.

The princess stepped to his side; her light-colored eyes were intently study. ing his face.

Dick Osborne," she said, in a silky little voice. "Dick is nicer t'an Rich, ard. You are English."

"No; I'm American."

"It iss the same t'ing. You look the same, and talk the same, and act the same!" She glanced around at the peasant who was staring from her to the money in his hand. From the man she looked at the headless fowl, and

shuddered.

"Come on away," said Dick. She did not move, and the boy, who was a head taller, took her arm and drew her along with him. A little tremor passed through the princess; her eyes flashed up at Dick's face, caught the cool, matter-of-fact expression, and fell to the path. She made no effort to draw away. Still holding her arm, Dick led her to the arbor. Half-way down the path the princess slipped gently from his grasp. Dick did not notice it; he was interested in a bunch of grapes overhead and wondering if they might

not be edible, although scarcely ripe.
"Do you like grapes?" he asked.
"No!" said the princess petulantly.
Dick glanced at her in surprise.

"Well, you don't have to eat them," said he.

The princess frowned, then pointed to the back of his hand.

"Your hand iss cut!"
Dick glanced at it indifferently.

"Must have scratched my knuckles on his cap. It's nothing."

The princess was silent. Dick tried the grapes and found them almost ripe enough to eat.

"You safed me from being hurted," said the princess slowly. "The man was mad like a bull. He would haf hurted me."

"That's because you made him crazy, slashing him like that."

The princess regarded him from the corner of her eyes.

"Do you like best to fight?" she asked, and added: "Or to eat unripe grapes?"

"I don't mind fightin'," answered the boy, "if you've got something to fight about."

"You should be a soldier."

"That's what I am going to be. Next year I am going to West Point. That's our military college. I'm studyin' now with a tutor. It will be easier for me, 'cause I've always known French and German and Italian." He broke off to climb after a fresh bunch of grapes. "These are riper—want some?"

"No," said the princess shortly. Her

light eyes followed every movement of the boy, but not directly; there was a faint flush under her clear, olive skin.

"Are you glad you—you safed me from being hurted?" she asked, almost shyly.

Something in her voice caught Dick's attention. He turned slowly, a large purple grape between his lips. His eyes met those of the princess. She slipped off her glove and held out her hand.

"I t'ank you," she said, almost faint-ly

Dick took the small hand in his and shook it awkwardly, then dropped it. But his eyes were still held by some strange power in those of the princess.

"Oh, that was nothing," he said in a voice of puzzled embarrassment, for a hot glow had appeared in the princess' cheeks and she was looking at him strangely.

"Do you not v'vish to kiss my hand?"
Dick's eyes opened wide; he felt the blood pouring into his face; the princess saw it and her own cheeks grew crimson. Suddenly the boy reached for the princess' hand, and his blue eyes began to gleam. The girl looked at him, frightened and fascinated.

"American men don't kiss girls' hands," said he. "If there's any kissin' to be done it's on the lips." And before the princess knew what was going to happen she found her slender body clasped in the boy's strong arms and a pair of firm and very grapy lips pressed against her own. The next moment she was free and stood breathing hard, her face quite pale and a purple stain at the corner of her mouth. Dick glanced at her and laughed.

"Better wipe your lips!" said he. "It's a give-away!"

The princess tried to speak, failed, tried again with the same result. Suddenly she turned, fled down the arbor, and disappeared in the foliage beyond.

"Funny things, girls," thought Dick, and reached up one long arm for a large and almost luscious bunch of grapes.

Thirteen years later, sailing from Marseilles for the Levant on a steamer of the Messageries, Dick found himself face to face with an old acquaintance; this was a handsome, elderly man of military bearing and markedly Oriental type.

"How do you do, General Kostovo?"

said Dick, in French.

The other man turned with an almost alarming suddenness. When he saw who had spoken his face cleared and he sprang forward with out-

stretched hands.

"My old friend and comrade in arms, Osborne Pasha!" he cried, embracing Dick in the French manner. "And how have you been all of these months, and where? And is your wound quite healed? The last time that I saw you was at Batchak, where we were busy killing bandits for Abd-ul-Hamid!"

"I've been in Morocco, and I'm quite

fit, thanks. And you?"

General Kostovo's keen eyes were watching him intently from under their gray, bushy brows. He ignored Dick's

question.

"Yes, we were very busy with those bandits, were we not? Tchk, tchk! The sultan's methods were wrong! They make them there faster than we could kill them. As you said at the time, he should have set them to killing each other; but that would have thrown us out of employment! Tchk, tchk!" He laughed. "And where are you bound for now?"

Dick laughed, then lowered his voice.
"You will have a shock when I tell
you. I am bound for Podoni, en route

for Karamania."

"And what," said General Kostovo, "do you propose doing there? Excuse me for asking, but that, you know, is my country."

"I know it very well. I am going there to offer my sword to the Prin-

cess Lilear."

"Sh' sh' sh!" Kostovo looked quickly around him. "Come over here."

He led Dick to the rail. The vessel was under way and the French coast was looming astern, its rugged outlines sharp and clearly cut and hard against a sky which seemed devoid of all trace of atmosphere. Dick, glancing at it,

saw that they might expect the mistral before morning.

it

"And why," asked Kostovo, "do you think that the Princess Lilear has need of your sword at this particular mo-

ment?"

"Hamdi Pasha has been buying arms. I know what that means; that what you hinted at two years ago is due to happen very soon. So here I am. Is the princess with you?"

"Yes. I have been to fetch her from England. She has been living there—too long! She is more English than Karamanian. We are traveling incognito to guard against all danger to her from Hamdi's agents. We shall disembark at Podoni where an escort of our troopers will meet us to conduct us to Istria. But even yet I do not understand. Why do you wish to enter our service?"

"I'm out of 'work' and this promises to be interesting. Besides that, I like your people, and I've got a grudge against the Ottoman Empire! But if you take me I shall want to run the

whole show."

"Have you met my niece?" asked

Kostovo.

"The princess and I have met but once; that was many years ago in Switzerland. She was thrashing a peasant for killing a hen."

"She would do the same to-day! That is part of our faith. We do not kill

things."

"It is a good faith," said Dick dryly, "but please excuse me for doubting that you are shining examples of it—after Macedonia!"

Both men laughed; Dick, glancing down the deck, saw a slender, graceful

figure leaning on the rail.

"We can talk business later," said he.
"With your permission I will speak to
the Princess Lilear."

"Perfectly."

They walked down the deck. The princess looked up, and Dick wondered at the very slight change from the child whom he remembered. Her figure was matured, of course, its curves fuller and more womanly, but the intense, light-colored eyes, the clear olive skin with

its ruddy undertone, and the smoky hair were all the same. He bowed.

"How do you do, Osborne Pasha," said the princess, offering her hand. Dick observed that the low-pitched voice had the rich note which he had never quite forgotten.

"I did not think that you would re-

member me," said he.

"You have not changed. Except for your beard and mustache, you look precisely as you did"-the color tinted her clear skin-"in Switzerland, so many years ago!"

"Osborne and I are old comrades," "We fought-or persaid Kostovo. haps I should say, hunted-shoulder to

shoulder in Macedonia."

"I have heard of you from time to time," said the princess, looking at Dick. "You have always been fighting somewhere."

"That's my work."

"And now," said Kostovo, "Osborne Pasha wishes to espouse the cause of Karamania."

The princess looked quickly at Dick; her eyes rested upon him thoughtfully. "Do you so much enjoy fighting?"

"Sometimes; but that's not it. One need not be bloodthirsty to be a sol-

dier."

Kostovo began to tell an experience of their campaign. Dick leaned both elbows on the rail and listened. The princess, her shoulder against a stanchion, studied Dick through half-veiled eyes. Every detail of him bespoke the soldier, the young but veteran cam-Hardship and responsibility had lent ten years to his apparent age; perhaps to his actual age. Physically, he was a scant six feet with heavy bones and tough, lean muscles. tremes of climate had already left their imprint on his clean-cut face and drawn fine lines at the corners of his clear, gray eyes. Yet there was much of the boy whom she so well remembered, especially about the mouth and the lower part of a face which might have been too severe without the fair mustache and closely trimmed beard.

At dinner Dick had an opportunity

to observe the princess, who sat opposite. The steamer was one of the commercial boats of the line, and there were but three other passengers, Levantines, who were placed at another table. Dick, a trained observer, glanced seldom at the princess. She was a very lovely woman, he reflected without emotion; her face held more than mere beauty; it had intensity, temperament and strength of will. The rich tone of color under the long, light-colored eyes showed civil strife; there were also a few fine lines at the corners of her mouth, the upper lip of which was slightly aslant and inclined to quiver in the middle during her speech or even at some passing emotion. Such a mouth, Dick thought, belonged less to a queen than to an actress; but perhaps the princess could play both rôles. At any rate, the mouth itself looked as if it were meant to laugh-or kiss; and the princess did not look as if she ever did either.

After dinner General Kostovo asked

Dick to take coffee with him.

"You speak Turkish," he said, lighting a cigarette. "I remember you spoke it at Batchak. You would have no difficulty with our Karamanian tongue, which is much the same."

"And yet your people are distinctly different."

Kostovo nodded absently.

"Karamania's hour has struck," said "Turkey has gangrene, only it is the part cut off which heals. When the present sultan came upon the throne she had lost Bosnia, Bulgaria and Montenegro. Servia and Rumania were independent. Russia has taken back the slice of Bessarabia which she lost in 1856, and held to what she grabbed in Asia-Kars, Batoum and Ardahan. England has been given the island of Cyprus, and Thessaly has gone to Greece. Europe, and especially England who has lost her footing at the Porte, expects and hopes to see within a short time the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. Mark my words!" He waved his cigarette impressively. "Old as I am, I expect to live to hear a Christian mass said in Agia Sophia and to see the Moslem paint washed from the figures of its Byzantine mosaics!"

"Islam," said Dick flippantly, "is on

the toboggan!"

"And Turkey is rotten to the core; why should Karamania rot with it? On the other hand, we will not submit to Grecian rule, nor would it be a good business proposition for Greece to impose it. Besides"—he grinned—"that would bring down the wrath of the Powers, who, between you and me, are very sore over the results of their meddling in Macedonia. Nothing would please them more"-he waved his cigarette-"than to see Karamania assert her independence under a proper newly formed dynasty!"

Dick tugged at his mustache.

"How about the Porte?" he asked. "The sultan is sick of us! We have dragged him into altercation, cost him large sums of money, and brought him no revenues."

"Then," said Dick slowly, "the trouble

is-Hamdi Pasha.'

"Exactly. Hamdi Pasha was recalled from Paris for being unorthodox and suspected of being involved with the Young Turkish Party. Then he got himself appointed governor-general of Karamania. Before he had been there long the Porte recalled him, when he flatly refused to budge. As soon as I learned that he had taken over the Turkish garrison into his own service and paid them their six months' arrears of pay, I saw what was in the wind."

Dick whistled softly. Kostovo leaned toward him and dropped his

"But I was not taken unprepared. For months past I had been organizing a regiment of light cavalry, Akindschis, and with the sheiks had been drilling them by separate troops, back in the hills. Hamdi knows of their existence, but he does not know"-Kostovo whispered-"that we have a full thousand of the best mounted, best armed, and best fighting troopers that the world has ever seen!"

Dick looked up questioningly.

manians are a fighting-stock, and our horses, as you know, are famous the world over. My men are armed with modern weapons, carbines and revolv-The days of steel are past: of course, they have their yataghans to fall back on in a pinch. Besides the Akindschis, we have now recruited six hundred Sepahis, a full regiment of infantry, and I have several tons of arms and ammunition in the hold of this vessel."

"There's some fun ahead for brother

Hamdi!" said Dick.

General Kostovo snapped his fingers. "I do not give that for Hamdi. Hamdi is whipped before we start. The trouble is-starting!"

Dick raised his eyebrows. "Wheels

within wheels?" he asked.

"Precisely. The Karamanians, as you know, owe their hereditary allegiance to the Princess Lilear, and they would fight for her to the last man, but for one thing. She is unmarried!"

What has that got to do with it?" "The sheiks refuse to crown an unmarried woman as Queen of Karamania; they claim that as long as she is unmarried she is a menace. You see, they are afraid of some alliance with one of our more powerful neighbors. On the other hand, they will not acknowledge fealty to anybody but the princess.

"Then marry her."

"As soon as I discovered that Hamdi was at work," Kostovo continued, "I went at once to England to fetch the princess. Now that I have got her she is of no use without a husband! Tchk, tchk!" He rapped his hands "Previously I together in vexation. had tried all over Europe to make a match for her, but as she is not yet recognized as royalty herself she cannot marry royalty.'

'Must she marry royalty?"

"I am not so sure. The main thing is to get her safely married."

"But how about the princess-her

own feelings, I mean?"

"Tchk! She will do as she is told." Kostovo's tone was indifferent. "She "I am not exaggerating. We Kara- is patriotic; she will make any personal sacrifice." He turned to Dick.
"Do you know the Grand Duke
Michael of Salzburg?"

"That pestiferous rake who hangs around Nice and Monte Carlo?"

Kostovo shrugged. "He is a royal duke. He saw the princess at Nice and became infatuated. He is enormously rich and a widower."

"He is said to have killed his wife

by his brutality!"

"On dit—on dit! Do you know, I am half tempted to send him a wire? I believe he would marry the princess to-morrow. Of course, the marriage would be morganatic until she was crowned, but that should be soon."

Dick was silent for a moment, then

he said slowly:

"But knowing what you do of him, would you marry her to such a man?"

"Why not? She might fancy him. Many women have, I understand. Besides, the princess is quite able to take care of herself; she could keep him at arm's length if she chose."

"For how long? Such a brute! He locked one of his grooms in a box stall

and set the straw on fire.'

"The princess could handle him," said Kostovo doggedly. "She has peculiar ideas of her own on matrimony. While willing to take a consort she insists that her marriage"—he glanced at Dick and grinned—"shall only be such in name."

Dick softly blew out his breath.

"How about the question of an heir?"

he asked.

"Tchk! I have never dared suggest anything so indelicate. I do not understand her at all. She has never shown the slightest interest in menor a man. Once when I questioned her she flew into a passion, and said that she had never seen but one person whom she would marry, and that as there was no possibility of marrying him she would never marry at all. That was years ago, when she was little more than a child."

"And yet you would marry her to

this brute?"

"It is not a matter of choice," said Kostovo impatiently. "We have come to a crisis. This is no time to go husband-hunting. Hamdi has taken advantage of my absence to push matters to a climax. What is one to do? If you can suggest any better means I should be glad to hear of it."

For a few moments Dick smoked meditatively. Kostovo played with the string of prayer-beads which, although far from being a "true believer," he carried Turklike, as a pocket-toy. Presently Dick flicked his cigar into the

scuppers.

"Why not give it out to your sheiks," he began slowly, "that a desirable match has been contracted for the princess upon the condition of her being throned. Pledge your Divan to secrecy; then give them any name you choose—the name of some actual royalty! Afterward, to convince them and to furnish a figurehead, marry the princess then and there by proxy to this sham husband."

"What is that? Marry her by

proxy?"

"Perfectly. Give them something to fasten to. Bluff 'em, man, lie to them. What are they, anyway, but a lot of simple-minded hillmen? Marry the princess by proxy and show them the proxy!"

The general found it difficult to

speak.

"But that is-tchk, tchk, tchk! But

the proxy--"

"What about the proxy? The proxy doesn't matter—that!" Dick snapped his fingers. "He's a sham. He is married as a matter of form to represent some other person; consequently, he is not married himself at all. He is nothing; or, he is 'x,' the unknown quantity!"

"But—but—who could be proxy?"
"Anybody whom you can trust.
Marry her to anybody—to me, if you

like!"

"To you!"

"Well, since it's all a sham it doesn't matter. I would do as well as anybody else. Better, perhaps. You could give it out that I had been sent out from—say England, for the purpose."

"And afterward?"

"Afterward, my royal master can repudiate his contract; and you can get some real person. With the princess throned that would be easy enough.'

General Kostovo was mute. Presently he clapped his hands, and his serv-

ant appeared.

"Coffee," said the general. turned to Dick. "This is an extraordinary suggestion. It requires thought."

"Yes, think it over." Dick dropped his voice. "You spoke about some arms

and ammunition down below."

"Yes; I have practically our supplies for the whole campaign, which should not be a long one. The steamer stops for a day and a half at Saros, just this side of Podoni; I shall send a courier from there with a message to Colonel Razamachi Bey, of the Akindschis; he will be at Podoni with a troop when we arrive." He chuckled. "Tchk, tchk! The stuff will be in an araba train and across to Istria before Hamdi knows that we are in the country!"
"Unless," said Dick, "he knows that

it is coming."
"No, no! There is no chance of that. It came through Mallock & Co. of New York as agricultural machinery, and was transhipped in bond at Marseilles.'

"Then it ought to be all right. have never known Mallock to slip up."

"As soon as it is landed," said Kostovo, with a grin, "my troop of Akindschis will pass it through the customhouse, load it into the arabas, which will be ready, and start immediately for the interior. Nothing could be sim-

pler."

Before long they separated for the The princess had already retired, and Dick did not see her until the following afternoon. As he was standing by the rail watching the gambols of a school of porpoises she came on deck, and his first glance at her face showed him that something had gone wrong. He had already observed that when under the influence of any emotion the light-colored eyes of the princess became curiously intent, and, as if conscious of this and wishing to minimize the startling effect produced, she had a habit of half lowering the lids and scrutinizing one through the double fringe of long, black lashes.

When abreast of Dick the princess

stopped. Dick bowed.

"I wish to speak with you, Osborne Pasha," she said, acknowledging his bow with a cool nod.

"I am at your service. Can I get

you a chair?'

"No, thank you." The color began to glow through the princess' cheeks. "General Kostovo," said she, "has just told me of your suggestion for satisfying the sheiks in regard to my marriage. He seemed to think that it was a very clever plan."

"What do you think?"

"I think that it is deceitful, undignified and absurd! Moreover, I will never consent to it."

"Then," said Dick calmly, "we will

have to give it up."

The princess regarded him fixedly; a pale gleam shone from between her very dark eyelashes. Her color deepened to a ruddy olive.

"I can scarcely believe," said she,

"that you meant it seriously."

"I surely did. It's a mighty serious matter to me.'

"Indeed?"

"Well, rather! I offered to be the proxy!"

The pretty mouth of the princess grew vicious in expression.

"It is precisely the sort of plan," said she, "that one might expect from a professional-fighter!"

Dick did not answer.

"Any personal sacrifice which I might be asked to make," pursued the princess bitterly, "would be preferable to such cheap trickery."

"Very well. Go ahead and make it. Tell Kostovo to send for the Grand

Duke Michael."

"For whom?"

"The Grand Duke Michael. That's the consort he had picked for you. He really would answer the purpose better, if it's all the same to you, I don't

The large eyes of the princess opened very wide. Dick did not notice her; he was watching the water clinging in little swirls to the rough side of the vessel. The princess walked somewhat unsteadily to the rail and stood, half turned from him. Presently he looked at her and, observing the droop of the pretty shoulders and the tense position of the small hand as it gripped an iron stanchion, the angry color faded from his face.

The princess turned slowly.

"Then it was to save me from that," she asked, "that you suggested this other plan?"

"Yes. From that, or something like

"You were acting as my friend?" "Trying to."

"That was good of you-to be my friend."

"I thought you needed one; you've thousand fighting-men got several swearing allegiance to you, and not a single friend, so far as I can find out."

The princess looked at him fixedly. "I am sorry I hurt you," said she. "You didn't; I'm not easily hurt."

"I think," said the princess softly, "that it would not be difficult to hurt you.'

Dick flushed. The princess studied

him curiously.

"You have not had much to do with women, Osborne Pasha," said she.

"That's true."

"You don't know much about them." "Say 'nothing' and you'll hit closer. I don't need to in my work."

"Do you like such work?" asked the

princess.

"I don't know; I don't mind fightin', when you've got something decent to

fight about."

The words rang in her ears like an echo; there came the swift picture of a vine-covered arbor with the warm Swiss sunlight filtering through in yellow bands. She saw a strongly framed boy looking at her with a gleam in his blue-gray eyes, and felt a pair of muscular young arms around her shoulders, while two firm, grapy lips were crushed against her own. The blood rushed into her face and she turned away in sudden confusion.

When she looked at him again Dick

was resting both elbows on the rail, staring out across the sea. The princess stole a glance at his keen, rugged face. It showed no emotion of any kind; in fact, there was nothing in it to indicate that he was conscious of her presence. She wondered if a man who looked like that could really feel, and a sudden curiosity prompted a quick, thoughtless question.

"Have you ever been in love?" she asked, and then would have bitten her tongue off to have left the words un-

"Yes," answered Dick, without looking around. "Have you?"

"I-I think so," stammered the princess.

Dick laughed, as if the absurdity of the question had suddenly struck him. He turned sharply and looked at her with a quick, keen scrutiny, and the princess felt as if she were at most not more than ten years old and made of some transparent material. Dick noticed her confusion and laughed more heartily.

"You're a funny girl," he said, with utter naturalness, and the princess felt instantly at her ease.

"And I think that you are only a big, rough boy," she answered, almost shy-

Dick wrinkled his forehead.

"See here; I came into this thing to command your army and look after your soldiers and all that. Now I see that I've got to take care of you, too."

"Indeed you have not!"

"Yes I have. There's no one else to do it. So if I'm ever short or emphatic, you're not to mind-d'ye see?" "But I shall mind. I shall very

much mind."

"Oh, well, then we'll be scrappin' all the time, I s'pose," he growled. "Anyway, you're to know that it's all for your own good. D'you understand?" He laid one big-boned hand on the princess' arm, and looked at her stern-

"I-I-yes, I think so," stammered the princess. "Hush! Here comes my

"Oh, hang your uncle!" snapped Dick. "I'm not in his service; I'm in yours!"

The voyage to Podoni passed without incident. When they landed at the quaint, picturesque little port Kostovo learned to his dismay that there was

no sign of his cavalry escort.

"Nothing could be more annoying," he exclaimed to Dick that evening as they were taking coffee on the terrace in front of the little hotel. "There is my precious ammunition down in the custom-house entirely unguarded! I shall not sleep a wink! I would stand guard myself, but for arousing suspicion!"

Dick also was anxious. The arms and ammunition represented the key which was to unlock the country for the princess. By midnight, finding sleep impossible, he slipped on some clothes, and stepping quietly out of his room which opened on the terrace, took the path which led to the harbor.

The night was very still, starlit but without a moon. Reaching the quay a short walk brought him to the custom-house. The building itself was of the type peculiar to such structures in all the little ports of the world; oblong, built of stone and cement, with barred

windows and iron shutters.

At the corner of the building he stood for a moment, listening. There was not a sound. He was about to return to the hotel when his eye was caught by a black object moving along the quay from the opposite direction. A moment later and it was outlined against the sheen of water on the bay, when he discovered the figures of three men, two of whom were carrying between them a bulky object. Not wishing to be seen, he slipped around the corner of the building and waited.

To his surprise the three men walked quickly up to the front of the custom-house. One of them drew a key from his pocket and opened the door, when the other two entered, carrying between them what Dick took to be a good-sized jug. The sight of this object explained the whole performance.

"Custom-house officials come down to steal a jug of bonded brandy," he

thought

The idea of interference never occurred to him. It was not his brandy. The last thing which he desired was to excite the suspicion of their being anything within which might warrant a watch being kept on the building. Moreover, he knew the corruption to be expected of Oriental officialdom, and found nothing unusual in the pilfering of a tithe of the goods committed to its care.

A few minutes later the two men came out and hurried away. The third man quickly closed the iron door, locked it, then stood for a moment with the key in his hand, apparently

listening.

"Something has frightened them," thought Dick, and looked warily about. Nothing stirred. The only noise was the soft lapping of the waves upon the soft lapping of the waves upon the sort to be about the soft to the first time.

beach. Puzzled, and for the first time suspicious, he looked back at the watch-

er by the door.

Suddenly the man turned, lifted his arm, and threw the key far out into the water. Dick heard the splash and a fearful doubt rushed into his brain. In three leaps he reached the man, gripped him by the throat and flung him against the side of the building. As the dim starlight fell upon the pallid face Dick recognized one of the three Levantines who had come from Marseilles on his steamer.

"Swine!" he snarled in French.

"What are you doing here?"

There was no need to ask. The heavy petroleum smoke was already oozing from the crevices of the iron shutters; within there was a dull roaring sound, mingled with the sharp

crackling of burning wood.

Dick threw the man aside, grabbed the latch of the door and shook it violently, but it was of iron and as solid as the gate of a prison. One after the other he tried the window-shutters, but they, too, were strong and unyielding. He was hammering at one of them with his heel when there came the crash of an explosion, and a dense cloud of

ruddy smoke eddied from a crevice in the roof.

Realizing somberly that all was lost, and not wishing to be seen loitering about the place, Dick hurried back to the hotel. As he reached the terrace there was the roar of another explosion, and a tongue of flame in a multitude of sparks leaped high into the air. A rattling volley of smaller reports followed, and with this the town suddenly awoke. Shouts and cries and the sound of hurrying feet arose from all about.

Dick was watching the conflagration from his window when there came the noise of some one beating violently on his door. He threw it open and Kostovo burst into the room. The man was frantic with rage and despair.

"You see!" he shricked. "It is the custom-house! It is the custom-house!"

"I know it. Don't make so much noise!" Dick slammed the door shut.

"But it is the custom-house! My ammunition! My arms and ammunition!" Kostovo rushed up and down the room, raving.

"Be quiet, will you?" said Dick fiercely. "The whole thing's a plot. We've been sold out. Keep still a minute and I'll tell you about it. Hamdi means to nip us in the bud."

"Hamdi! Pig of a Turk! But how could he know? How? How?" Kostovo stopped short and glared at Dick.

"Because he's a strategist. Because he's never had his eye off you since you left, I suppose. The man's a fox; he doesn't want to fight; he'd rather outwit you."

Kostovo burst into tears. For a moment Dick really pitied him.

"Come out of doors," said he. "It isn't safe to talk here."

He led the general out upon the terrace where they found the princess, watching the fire.

"It is the custom-house," she said in a trembling voice.

"Yes," said Dick. "The Kingdom of Karamania has lost the first round. But the fight is not yet over." "We can't fight with empty guns," groaned Kostovo.

"You've still got the bayonet." Kostovo ignored the remark.

"Mash Allah!" he wailed. "This will cut down the Akindschis' carbine-cartridges to scarcely enough for one pitched battle! It will reduce the muster of the Sepahis to four hundred men, with scant ammunition for a single day's fighting, and our infantry will have to fall back on the rusty old weapons which we had discarded." The tears gushed from his eyes. "That pig of a Razamachi! Why was he not here with his troop, as ordered?"

"Don't blame him; it's all of the same piece. Your courier never reached Istria. I'll bet he's at the bottom of some gully with a bullet through his head."

"And you think that the burning of the custom-house—"

"That was Hamdi's work. I had the disgrace of seeing it done." In a few brief words he told his story.

Kostovo threw his hands above his head with a gesture of despair.

"Then those Levantines were Hamdi's spies! We are beaten at the start!"

"Better at the start than at the finish," said Dick.

"The finish! The finish is here! Or rather, it is there!" Kostovo pointed toward the lurid blaze.

"No, it's not. It's a long way off—for us. You'll see!"

"Of course," said the princess, with bitter irony, "the loss of the ammunition is nothing. We still have Osborne Pasha."

"Before we can get any more," groaned Kostovo, "Hamdi will hold Karamania. To think that you should have stood there and watched them set the place afire!"

"But there were three of them," said the princess, raising her chin, "and Osborne Pasha was unarmed. When two of them went away it was too late!"

Dick bit his lip to keep back an answer.

"And you never guessed what they

were up to?" snapped Kostovo. "Not even when they came out without the

jug?"
"I must have been asleep. Or else, as the princess intimates, it may have been-discretion."

"I did not mean that exactly, but I am so disappointed!" The princess choked back a sob.

"It is all over," groaned Kostovo. "It

is the end."

"Poor Karamania!"

"And that descendant of ten thousand reputationless odalisks, Hamdi."

There was another long silence while the flames licked higher, and the sparks flung violently upward by succeeding minor explosions mounted straight into the still, lurid sky. The glare was reflected crimsonly from the faces of the princess and Kostovo as they watched their proud ambitions ascending in clouds of flame-flecked smoke.

"Perhaps," said the princess, with a touch of asperity, "Osborne Pasha has still some strategic counsel to offer."

Dick did not answer.

"Have you?" asked Kostovo.

"Yes."

"Indeed? Then why don't you offer it?" asked the princess.

"I'm waiting." "For what?"

"For you and your uncle to have your cry out."

"What is that?"

"For you to stop cry-babying. You two intimate that I've lost your ammunition. Perhaps I have; but you've lost what we need even more for this work, and that is sand! Hamdi outwits you and you sit down and cry. We have got a facer, but we're not finished by a long shot. At least, I'm not!"

"It's easy to talk," snapped the prin-

cess.
"You have nothing to lose," growled

Kostovo.

"I've got my life." He turned to the princess. "Yes, it's easy to talk and it's easy to blubber. Suppose we stop both and act. We will wait one day for Razamachi; if he doesn't come we'll ride on to Istria without him, and then we'll see what's to be done.

lost the first round. Very good. Perhaps we may lose the second and the third and the fourth-but it's the one who wins the last round who wins the fight!"

Kostovo shrugged. Dick turned to

the princess.

"I came to you to offer my services," said he. "Your uncle has already accepted them in your behalf-and Karamania's. Do you?"

The princess was staring at the fire. "If I do," said she, "what then?" "Then I will make you Queen of

Karamania."

"And in the meantime?"

"In the meantime, I am in command! Do you accept?"

The princess started to speak, then checked herself.

"Do you?" he asked crisply.

She drew herself up. "Yes," she answered.

"And it is understood that I am in command?"

She turned her face toward him, and their eyes met in a look which held more of a challenge than an offer and acceptance of allegiance.

"You may direct the campaign," she answered, "and my people will obey

you; so will I-if I choose.'

#### CHAPTER II.

Karamania is a country of wild, bleak hills, sandy plains, and streams which when not dry are torrential. There are forests of pine and oak; the latter bears an edible acorn; and here in the light snows of winter one may find countless tracks of deer, wolf and

Of the inhabitants, there are two classes, the Turkish stock and the pure Karamanian. The latter is a distinct race and appears to form some connection between the Italians and Rumanians. The Karamanians are a swift, warm, and impetuous folk, wild and shy at first, then wild and loving or wild and fierce, according to conditions, but always wild.

Up in their hills, for they dwell high among the rocks, the wayfarer will hear much laughter and music. Their religion is vague, a relic of some early pantheism with a few Mohammedan principles, or at least enough to make the "true believer" hate them as heretics with a fanatic frenzy not directed toward the self-acknowledged Giaour. Some are disciples of the Vaisee sect of dervishes, who are accused by the other orders of being anti-Mohammedans.

Physically they are a small, strongmuscled people, quick of movement. Dark skins and light-colored eyes con-

stitute a tribal feature.

Karamania has one wealth and industry; the horse. The stock is Arab, crossed with a breed from the plains of Hungary, and it produces animals which are swift and strong, of good size, and sure-footed as mountain-

goats.

The business center of the country is the town of Karoz, which lies in a swale on the edge of a small river, usually consisting of standing pools. The sole commerce of Karoz is the horse-market, and this is sufficiently celebrated to bring buyers from all parts of Europe, and to establish at its center that peculiar society in which nationality, caste, customs and religion are relegated to the same plane-the democracy of the horse! Also, it brings gold in plenty, and the parasites thereof. In the Grand Hotel du Cheval d'Or one finds a cordon bleu, vintage wines, an ice-plant and electric lights. There is a Jockey Club, built all of native marble, with priceless Turkish rugs and antimacassars covered with Rhodes and Bokhara embroideries.

So the horses, bred in the hills by the swift, warm Karamanians, bring money to the high villages, and of this a tithe has always gone to their feudal overlords, of whom the Princess Lilear was the last descendant. Her ancestral home was at Istria, twenty miles back from Karoz in the hills, and was built within the semiruined walls of a Geno-

ese fortress.

As for Karoz itself, the Ottoman has always laid an indolent claim upon so much as contains the town, and kept a sluggish, dirty, unbuttoned Turkish garrison in the old Frankish castle on the river. But no sultan has ever tried to hold the hills, and so their free people have always claimed them for themselves and paid no taxes except the land tithe to their acknowledged hereditary lords.

When Dick awoke at Podoni the first thing to meet his eyes, dazzled by the flood of sunlight on the bay, was a long, white hull, a buff funnel, and a brilliant American yacht ensign which trailed from the taffrail almost into the

"My ubiquitous compatriot," thought

he. "I wonder who it is."

He put his glasses on the yacht and read the name, "Rêveuse."

"French boat chartered by some Yank who slaps our flag on her without the slightest right—and the Lord help the man who tries to pull it down! French crew, also, or they'd have their bunting mastheaded two blocks."

A little later, while making a leisurely breakfast on the terrace the gravel crunched behind him, and a harsh but pleasant voice said almost in his ear:

"Hello, Dick. Where is the fight now?"

Dick wheeled in his chair. Looking down upon him was a young man of uncanny height, most of which was claimed by his legs. His shoulders were very broad, very thin, and his tanned face was shrewd but pleasant and contained a pair of steely, deep-set eves.

"Hello, Jim," said Dick. "I was wondering what could have floated in on that Franco-American packet. So it was you! Well, well!" He broke an egg. "Have you breakfasted?"

an egg. "Have you breakfasted?"
"Yes, but I will breakfast again,

thank you."

"Garçon!" said Dick. "Bring a large pot of coffee, four portions of toast, six eggs, and all of the butter you have

"Good old Dick!" said Jim. He seated himself opposite his friend. "I see you have not forgotten my healthy habits. My steward apparently intends

that I shall keep the Ramasan. He starves me all day and gorges me at night. He considers food poisonous before eleven a. m."

"Who is with you?"

"My sister. Of course you have heard the news." Jim began to grin. "Don't make me laugh! You've heard?"

He glanced shrewdly at his friend. Dick had looked up sharply at the mention of the sister; as Jim asked smilingly if he had heard the news his face stiffened and set.

"No," he said shortly.

"Please don't Jim laughed outright. make me laugh, old chap, but-it's not what you think. It's about her husband.

"Well?" Dick's face was grim.

"What about him?"

Jim chuckled. "He's dead!"

Dick bounded up in his chair, his face quite pale.

"What are you talking about? Are you crazy? Her husband is-

"Dead! Good and dead! They found him in his rooms at Monte Carlo, dead of-oh, ever so many things. been separated for six months, you know. Edith was aboard the yacht with me at the time."

Dick gave a gulp, and stared at his

egg.
"She was really cut up, although she had hated the beggar from the start. I cabled them to have him iced up until---

"Oh, hold on!"

"Why? I always hated the brute alive, and I don't like him any better dead. Then I cabled to see if his noble family wanted him. It appears that they did-for the first time in his life. Their collection dates back some centuries and they didn't want to spoil the set."

"And Countess von Essingen?"

"Don't call her that! You've always called her Edith, haven't you? Until you fought about something." eyes rested for a moment shrewdly upon his friend. "She said a few days ago that you were the only person she

wanted to see. She is coming ashore presently."

Dick was drumming on the table with his fingers and putting sugar in his coffee. At the fifth lump Jim drawled:

"Like it sweet, don't you, old boy?" Dick looked at him in a rather dazed way; then the color glowed through his tanned skin.

"You have such a tactful way of breaking news. Where are you from and what are you doing here?"

"I'm from Sardinia; been hunting moufflon. Now we're going to visit an old acquaintance who lives somewhere back in those hills. Do you know Hamdi Pasha?"

"You're not going to visit him!"

"Why not? He's asked me dozens of times. He tells me that there's the finest hunting-wolf and pig. First we're going to Karoz; I want to see their horses; may pick up some poloponies."

"But Edith?"

"She's going with me, of course. Hamdi's all right. He's governor-general up there.'

Dick sighed deeply.

"What made you come here?" he asked irritably. "Why didn't you go in the usual way?"

"Wanted to see the country. I've been making arrangements for horses and guides. It's perfectly safe; Hamdi told me so. But what are you doing here?" His shrewd eyes fastened on his friend. "Trouble in the Balkans?"

"Yes," snapped Dick. "I may as well tell you; of course you'll keep your mouth shut. I've come here to engineer a campaign against your friend Hamdi, for the independence of Kara-

Jim's keen eyes opened wide, then his face fell, and he banged the table with

a large bony fist.

"Let me in, Dicky; I'd be useful. You're the only man that ever beat me snap-shootin'; and I can trim you with a pistol!"

You'd be useful enough, but it wouldn't do. Besides, vou're a friend

of Hamdi's.

"Hamdi can go hang!"

"Perhaps he may. Did you notice what he's done to the custom-house?"

"Did he do that?"

Dick nodded. "We had some stuff in there. Look here, do you know the Princess Lilear—Mademoiselle Kostovo, as she is usually called?"

"I've met her. She's pretty."

"I'm in her service."

Jim whistled. "Wish I was. Where is she?"

Dick jerked his head toward the ho-

tel.

"We landed yesterday. Her uncle is bringing her from England. Their escort has not shown up, so we will wait until to-morrow morning and then start anyway. It's a seventy-mile ride; two days, for a woman."

"Let us ride with you," said Jim.
"All right. But you really can't stop in Karamania. Send the yacht around to Saloniki and go back that way. There's going to be a devil of a row."

Jim looked glum.

"All right. I really couldn't fight against Hamdi, could I? And of course I wouldn't fight against you. Darn it!" He scowled at the table. Suddenly his face cleared.

"Good old bloodthirsty Dick!" He glanced toward the water. "Here comes the launch now. Edith will have a fit! Let's go down. Finished? I'm too excited to eat those three other

eggs,"

Dick was a shade paler as they walked down to the landing; a moment later the launch slid alongside. A woman in black, who was sitting in the stern, glanced up and all of the color suddenly left her face.

"Dick!" she gasped.

Her brother helped her out. Dick stepped forward.

"I've just heard, Edith," he said.

She gave him her hand without speaking, and as it rested in his Dick looked at her with a rush of some indescribable emotion. A Frenchman had once referred to the Countess von Essingen as "that sophisticated nymph!" and one could find no better commentary. The sweet, pliant charm of her suggested some filtered corner of the

greenwood; her laugh seemed to come invisibly through flowering bushes; it hinted at the flash of warm pink against cool green or the tourmalin of a for-

est pool.

She was a woman with a surplus of high vitality; a richness of thought and feeling which gave to her delicious personality a liveness too profuse for a mortal. Her laugh alone, low as it was in pitch and volume, never failed to bring stares to the faces of women and blood to the faces of men. She was long of limb, agile, incapable of awkwardness as a pussy-cat, and like the pussy-cat, which she so much resembled in other ways, possessed of a supple strength which never knew fatigue. Yet no one ever guessed at this strength; contrary to diplomatic rules she betrayed only her weakness. blind man could have seen the temperament she held, but Machiavelli himself could not have guessed how strongly she held it.

Dick found her unchanged. She told him in a few words of the death of her husband, then passed to other

topics.

"Is Karamania interesting, Dick?" she asked.

"If you like horses."

"I do, when properly ridden. How about the people?"

"I will show you two of them in a few minutes."

"Who are they?"

"General Kostovo and his niece. We came on the same steamer from Marseilles. He is an old friend of mine."

"I have met a Karamanian princess; the Princess Lilear. She is very pretty, in a wild, Oriental sort of way."

Dick grinned somewhat ruefully. "Well, this is the Princess Lilear." "Oh!" Edith's pretty lips made a little circle.

As they were walking up to the hotel she asked: "Who does Karamania belong to, Dick?"

"Turkey claims it."

"Who else?"

"Well, it claims itself."

"And I suppose that some day"— Edith looked thoughtfully at the distant mountains—"it may attempt to make good that claim."

"Perhaps. that yacht?" How long has Jim had

"Not long. Is the Princess Lilear's family the royal one in Karamania, Dicky?"

"I believe so. What a beautiful sweep of bay that is to the right, with those rugged mountains behind it!"

"Glorious! Then if Karamania should ever get out from under the Turkish yoke there would be a possibility of the Princess Lilear being of the royal family, I suppose. Has she any male relatives, Dick?"

"You'd better ask her. There she is now. You say you know her?"

"We've met in Paris and at Cannes." General Kostovo and the princess were standing on the terrace, looking toward the bay. Jim, who had lingered to give some orders, joined his sister and Dick. Dick presented them to the princess, who immediately recalled them. At Jim's mention of Hamdi Pasha, Kostovo raised his eyebrows.

"Then you are going up to Karoz?"

he asked, in surprise.

"Yes. I've engaged horses and servants and an araba for our duffle. You think it's quite safe?"

The general knit his brows.

"It has always been safe on this side. Going down to Saloniki you will need an armed escort. I had expected some of my own men, but they have not appeared. But there is no danger in so large a party as ours. We will be some dozen or more. You will give us the pleasure of your company as far as Plev, will you not? Our roads part

"You are not going to Karoz?" asked

Edith.

"No, to Istria. But we are near neighbors. Hamdi's palace at Karoz is only twenty miles away; a morning canter. He has also a post at Suruk, and a very pretty palace there."

"Hamdi Pasha is Governor of Karamania, is he not?" asked Edith, in a limpid voice. "I suppose that means

that he is autocrat."

A gleam shot from under Kostovo's bushy eyebrows.

"I will ask you a riddle," said he, in what was meant to be a jocular tone. "On the Balkan Peninsula, what is the difference between a palace and a pig-sty? The answer is: 'Five minutes!"

Early morning of the next day found them well upon their journey. The road climbed steadily upward, winding through deep chasms in the rugged hills, twisting in and out of the dry beds of cataracts, and sometimes crossing fresh little swales planted in currants or olives. Now and again it skirted the flank of some bare mountain, wind-swept, desolate, from the slope of which there stretched away a magnificent panorama of brown, tumbling hills, trooping down to the blue

General Kostovo rode on ahead: some distance behind him came Dick by the side of Edith, while Jim and the princess followed. Well in the rear of the cavalcade were the servants and pack-animals, while the arabas transporting the heavy luggage were far

"These hills," said Dick to Edith, "are without doubt chock full of precious minerals."

"Are they? I think that she is perfectly charming, Dick."

"Who?"

"Your princess, of course."

"Why do you call her my princess? She's her own princess—so far as I

"Is she? But after you have got her crowned as Queen of Karamania? Whose princess will she be then, Dicky?"

"Karamania's. Do you see that high peak on your right? There is a monastery on the top, and they haul you up in a basket. Only they would not haul you up at all."

Edith looked at him and laughed, her eves half closed and her red upper lip

curled teasingly.

"How interesting! You can fool men, Dick, and some women-if they

want to be fooled, which is quite probable"-she looked at him aslant-"but you can't fool me. I've always been able to read you, haven't I, Dicky mine?"

"No. You haven't!"

Edith threw him a quick, curious Dick was staring straight ahead, his face rigid and a trifle pale. A fierce little expression passed across Edith's nymphlike features.

"Perhaps you are right, Dick. But we have always understood each other,

don't you think?"

"If we have"-Dick turned sharply and looked at her-"it hasn't done us

much good, has it?"

"Not to me, Dick; and you don't look as if your life had held as much happiness as-interest.'

"Whose fault?"

"Mine, Dicky-bird; all mine."

"Then why-"

"I thought that you-you might

"No you didn't!" interrupted Dick roughly. "If you understood me, as you claim to, you never thought any such thing!"

"Then I-hoped it." She looked at him smilingly and with the naughtiest expression which her nymphlike features could wear.

Dick stared back at her and his face grew dusky red.

"Don't talk like that! And don't look like that, either! It's not-

"Proper, Dicky?"

"Modest. Your count, heaven rest his good-for-nothing bones, has done

you no good."

"He did me no harm. He was never a husband, Dick. All he wanted was money; all I wanted was rank and position. Now I want-something else. Do you know what that is, Dicky?"

"Trouble."

"One kind: love!" She looked at him with humid eyes and red parted

"You can't have everything. Besides, you wouldn't know it when you got it-and it won't keep on ice."

Edith laughed. Warmest mischief

flooded her lovely face.

"Tell me, Dicky, after you've throned your princess, what will you do with

"What makes you think I want to throne her?" asked Dick irritably.

"What man wouldn't? I think that you've throned her already-in your heart. Be very, very careful, Dicky; Oriental women are not distinguished for their patience; they've got something else instead."

"Don't talk rot, Edith. Playing with firearms is my business, just as play-ing with fire is yours. I'm not here for sentimental reasons."

"Dicky, you taught me to observe. I've said stupid, crafty things-and watched the effect. Once General Kostovo looked at you and scowled, as if to say: 'What have you been telling this woman?' The joke of it is that if I really wanted to know I would ask him, and he would tell me in five minutes. He's a child.'

Dick laughed in spite of himself. "Well, what have you learned?"

"First, she's in love with you-and she knows it."

Dick wilted on his pony. He turned to Edith a face infinitely bored but utterly devoid of any trace of embarrass-

"I really believe you are getting old,

Edith."

She smiled maliciously. "Second. you are in love with her-and you don't know it."

Dick grinned. "That last is splendid. How did you ever guess? never knew it for a second."

The faintest shadow of doubt crossed

Edith's face.

"Tell me the rest, Dick."

"What rest?"

"Oh-you and your princess."

"That's all, my dear."

"Nonsense! After she's queen, what will your service do for her then?"

"Leave her."

"That seems to be your idea of service to a woman."

My service will be over then." "No, Dicky-boy, only just begun!"
"Not mine!" He stared straight be-

tween his pony's ears, then looked the

landscape over, and blew out his breath as if a trifle bored. Edith glanced curiously at his calm, clear-cut features, caught their expression of utter indifference, and a shade of doubt crossed her fresh face.

"Perhaps—" she said, as if to herself. Dick glanced at her and suppressed a yawn; his eyes looked sleep-

ily amused.

"Lump!" she flared out at him. The color rushed into her cheeks and she laughed.

"Silly!" said Dick.

"Perhaps I am!" Her eyes sparkled. "I don't believe you could feel anything. Even a sword-thrust. You'd die without it's hurting you. You've got no more nerves than a Chinaman."

Dick looked at her and grinned. "Why don't you stop acting novels, Edith, and write 'em? Then you could have people the way you want 'em."

Edith looked as if she were going to cry. Instead, she began to laugh.

"I wish your princess would poke up your fires, Dicky. But look out, my young friend; she's so jealous now that she could easily slip a knife into you and have me baled up in burlap and dropped into the Bosphorus. I'll bet that she beats you before you are a day older. And it will do you a world of good. Good-by. I'm going to talk to Kostovo; he's got some natural feelings, if he is half savage and bushyheaded. You are nothing better than a Spartan, or a janizary, or a gladiator, or some other sort of a fighting-machine. But I would like to see you fight-if only with your princess." She shook her reins, and her nimble little Arab skipped up among the rocks like a mountain-goat.

Dick looked after her with a set, rigid face; he took off his hat and batted a fly on his pony's neck. Then

he laughed.

Presently Jim hailed him.

"Come and ride with Princess Lilear," he called. "I want to go back after my camera and get some pictures."

Dick reined to the side of the road and waited. A moment later the princess rode up abreast. Jim wheeled his horse and ambled back down the trail. "Countess von Essingen got tired of

me," said Dick.

"Indeed?" replied the princess, a little coldly.

"Yes. She prefers the society of

your uncle.'

"Countess von Essingen," said the princess, "must wonder at your being here."

"She knows."

"She does?" cried the princess angrily. "How extremely indiscreet of you!"

"I did not tell her anything; she

guessed."

"And you told her that she had guessed correctly!" snapped the prin-

"I told her nothing; but I didn't contradict her, because if I had she would have thought that I was here to—eh to——"

"To what?"

"To make love to you," said Dick calmly.

The color rushed into the princess'

"How utterly absurd!" she cried angrily.

"Absolutely."

"What?"

"I agree with you."

The princess did not look particular-

y pleased.

"I am sorry," she said icily, "that I give the impression of being a woman who would permit a man to dangle about her in that way."

Dick did not answer. The princess observed that he was tugging at the end of his wiry mustache and studying the trail as though deep in thought.

"The Countess von Essingen is a very beautiful woman," she observed. "Don't you think so, Osborne Pasha?"

"Eh, what?" Dick looked around sharply. "I beg your pardon."

"Excuse me," said the princess sharply, "for having interrupted your train of thought. It was no doubt far more important than my remark."

"I was thinking," said Dick, "that it would be much better not to have Countess von Essingen and her brother go to Karoz. In the first place, Hamdi mustn't know that I'm at Istria."

"Surely you can trust your friends!"
"A woman is apt to let something slip. Hamdi knows my name, although we've never met. He'd put two and two together, and might rush things. Just now we are 'sparring for time.'"

"What would you suggest?"

"Couldn't you ask them to Istria?"
The princess compressed her pretty lips and glanced at him quickly. Dick was frowning at his pony's ears.

"Of course," said the princess, "any friends of Osborne Pasha's——"

"Oh, it's not a social thing," Dick interrupted, not too politely. "If you could put them up for a couple of days Hamdi would know that you were entertaining guests, and that would disarm all suspicion and give us a chance to get our breath and make some plans."

"Of course," said the princess, "we should be very happy to have them visit us. I will ask them when we stop for

lunch."

Something in her tone impelled Dick to glance at her quickly; the princess'

face was inscrutable.

"I hope," said the princess, in her coldest voice, "that any confidences which you may see fit to share with your friends will not include this ridiculous proxy marriage which my uncle appears to think necessary."

"Of course not!" said Dick sharply. The princess laughed, mirthlessly. "You are emphatic," she said.

Dick's tanned face darkened in tint. "They would not understand; besides, that is strictly our own affair."

"I don't understand it very well my-

self," said the princess.

"Don't worry. You can trust Kostovo to see that I don't get any claim on you."

"There would be no danger of that in any case,"

"Not the slightest."

"Nor of my having any claim upon you."

"No more than you've got now."

"If you feel as if you had me on your hands," said the princess, "you had better turn your pony around at once and go back where you came from."

"I feel," said Dick calmly, "that in a few days I will not only have upon my hands a spoiled and pampered princess but also her whole blessed country, her army, diplomatic corps, cabinet, and general infant dynasty. You've taken me on for the job and here I am until it's finished—or I am! Of course you are on my hands."

Dick's voice was stern and crisp, but there was a twinkle in his eye and a smile lurking under his mustache.

"You are not very respectful," exclaimed the princess angrily.

Dick wheeled in his saddle.

"Suppose you get our relative positions straightened out, once for all," said he, with a touch of austerity. "You are not yet queen by a great deal. You are only a princess by courtesy. Actually, you are Mademoiselle Kostovo, a woman subject of the sultan, which, as you know, is not a distinctly elevated social position. On the other hand, from the moment when Kostovo accepted my service in behalf of the country of which you are destined to be the chief figurehead, I have assumed command of everything, yourself included. Now don't let's have any more talk about my being respectful, and nonsense of that sort.

The princess did not answer. For some distance they rode in silence. Once the princess drew out her handkerchief and raised it furtively to her face, but the man at her side was not looking at her; did not appear to be giving her a thought. The silence was broken by Jim who clattered past, his camera slung over his shoulder, and his pony scrambling along the edge of the steep descent and starting small avalanches down its side.

"I'm going up to the head of the gorge," said he, "to get a picture of this procession as it comes up. You don't mind?" he asked the princess.

She shook her head at him and smiled, then glanced quickly away.

Dick turned and looked at her. The

princess' face was very pale and her eves half veiled. Between the lashes there was a light glint, almost metallic

"Hope I haven't hurt you," said Dick, "but it's always well to have an

understanding."

The princess did not answer.

"As commander-in-chief," he continued, "the discipline must reach throughout. If I've hurt your feelings tryin' to make this plain, I'm sorry."

"You brute!"

Dick shrugged. Presently he drew a note-book from his pocket and began to make some memoranda. The princess looked at him aslant. Her eyes passed quickly down the square, straight military figure to the big-boned hand which held the pencil. His pony shied, and instantly the powerful knees came together with a force which made the animal grunt. To the princess the man looked a rough-hewn, human fightingmachine. Unconsciously she sighed. "Tired?" asked Dick gently.

A quiver passed through the princess; still smarting, as she was, from the harsh words delivered to her the minute before, he himself had quite put them from his mind. A sudden sense of helplessness overcame her. turned her shoulder to him. stared for a moment, then rode on in

silence.

The road, just at this point wound up through a narrow gorge, opening above upon a broad plateau, the Plain of Plev. Here the high wind which almost continuously sweeps this bare expanse had drifted the fine golden sand into the funnel-shaped gully, and through this heavy carpet the horses were toiling patiently. Ahead of them rose the dark Kara mountains, looming higher above the sand-hills as they climbed. Below, the land fell away in rugged outline until, far in the distance, they caught the silver flash of the sea.

"You know what I told you on the ship," said Dick, presently. "I don't want to be rough, but we mustn't have any foolishness.

The princess' teeth came together

with a little click. She turned upon him suddenly; the color had all left her face and her light eyes with the pupils like pin-points were opened to the full of their startling width.

"You brute!" she cried passionately. "I'd like to see you fight! It's all you are fit for! I'd like to see you fight—and killed!"

As she spoke a gunshot rang out ahead; another followed it; then came a volley, the reverberations pulsing down the gorge on the flaws of the high wind. A wild clamor of yells arose; with them came the unmistakable reports of an automatic pistol: "Pank-pank-pank - pank - pank!" Short and sharp and evenly punctuated. Cries, gusty and fierce, followed, and the next instant a swarm of horsemen swept around a bend in the gorge and came pouring down upon them.

"Brigands!" said Dick. "Keep close to me!" His big army Colt was out

and resting on his hip.

On ahead, Kostovo and Edith had reined in at the first shot. The horseboys had promptly bolted. The general was struggling to unsling his carbine, but before he could get it clear the rush was upon them.

A hairy-faced rider cut savagely at Kostovo, who caught the blade on the stock of his weapon, turning it so that the flat side struck his pony across the ears. The animal screamed and reared, then swerved and losing his footing in the deep sand fell backward, flinging Kostovo to the ground.

The assailants did not wait; one of them tore the rein from Edith's hands and whipped it over her pony's head; another struck the beast upon the flank, and they were on after the others.

Straight at Dick and the princess they came, the riders yelling and brandishing their yataghans. Waiting until the range suited him, Dick threw up his big .45, and began to shoot with the quick but deadly accuracy of a plains-The first saddle was emptied, and as the rider lurched forward his pony stopped with a snort and a horseman close at his heels pitched into him; before he could clear himself the Colt barked again and he, too, was on the

ground.

With the tail of his eye Dick saw the brigand leading Edith's horse rush past; he swung in his saddle and fired, but without result. At the same moment he saw Edith lean far forward, something flashed in her hand and a jet of smoke spurted against the broad back of her captor, who reeled to one side and with a yell pitched headlong from his horse. The rein was in the crook of his elbow; the head of Edith's pony was jerked sharply down and the animal turned a somersault, flinging his rider to the sand.

But Dick was very busy. A brigand slashed at him with a yataghan; he caught the blow on his revolver, then shoved the muzzle into the man's face and fired. At the same instant the princess screamed, and he turned to see a huge, bearded man dragging her from

the saddle.

"Hang on!" yelled Dick, and flung

himself to her side.

The brigand loosed his hold and lunged at him across the back of the princess' pony. Dick swung his body clear of the thrust, getting only a cut on the top of his shoulder from the edge of the blade; then before the man could recover he grabbed his swordarm and, overbalanced as the fellow was, hauled him bodily out of the saddle and struck him a crushing blow across the head with his revolver.

But another brigand was almost upon him; his weapon was empty, and to escape being cut down he slipped from his pony, using the animal as a bulwark. Twice the man slashed at him, and for a moment the situation was almost ridiculous-Dick unarmed and dodging the assaults of the other. There came the crack of a carbine and the man fell across his pony's neck and began to scream. The yataghan dropped from his hand and he clutched at the mane; the horse wheeled and bolted, carrying him still screaming down the gorge.

The princess was striking savagely with her crop at a dismounted brigand who was trying to wrench the reins from her grasp. As Dick, yataghan in hand, rushed to her aid the man turned and ran, but before he had gone ten steps there came a gunshot and he fell. The princess' pony, maddened and frightened, was doing its best to bolt after the other horses, and might have succeeded had not Dick grabbed the bridle.

As swiftly as they had come the brigands were gone again, leaving a number of dead and dying men and a dead pony. Suddenly a fusillade from down the gorge told that they had en-

countered the servants.

"Well!" panted Dick. "You almost had your wish, didn't you? I hope you're satisfied!"

General Kostovo came toward them, running heavily through the deep sand and brandishing his smoking carbine.

"Mash Allah!" he gasped. "These accursed devils! These dogs of robbers! I'm afraid they've killed your friend—and they've got the countess!"

"No, they haven't," said Dick. "She's

over there!"

They looked around and saw Edith walking slowly toward them. Her habit was covered with powdery grains of golden sand; her hat was gone and her abundant chestnut hair tumbled about her shoulders. The small, silver-mounted revolver was in her hand.

"Mash Allah!" cried the general.
"You took care of yourself if I could

not take care of you!"

"Jim and I were born and bred on a ranch. Where is Jim?" She looked around and a sudden horror filled her

eyes.

"What are these dogs?" growled the general. "Such a thing has never happened in this district! They are not Macedonians, or Turks, or Servians!" He avoided Edith's eye.

"Where's Jim?" she repeated, her

face suddenly blanched.

"I'm afraid—"" began Kostovo, then stopped. Edith's eyes were opened wide and her lips were quivering. She walked unsteadily to Dick and putting both hands on his shoulder rested her forehead upon them, her breath coming

in gasps, her body swaying. threw one arm about her.

"Dick," she said chokingly, "they must have killed Jim!"

"We don't know yet, Edith. Let's go

"Just a moment, Dick." One of her hands slipped to his other shoulder and for a moment she rested her head against his chest. The princess looked on in silence.

"Wait here," said Kostovo. "I will

go. "I will go, too," said the princess, the only one who was still mounted. "Keep her here with you."

Edith freed herself.

"I am all right now. Come, Dick." Dick had already started through the deep sand, mechanically loading his revolver as he walked. Edith struggled to keep up with his long strides.

"Dick, dear!" she said.

wounded."

"Wounded?" asked the princess breathlessly.

"It's nothing," growled Dick. "Just a little slice. Let's hurry!"

"I can't keep up," panted Edith. Dick held out his hand and she slipped hers into it. Kostovo was hanging to the princess' stirrup, puffing as he walked. They passed two brigands, face down; a few yards distant a wounded man was sitting up, watching them narrowly. At sight of him Kostovo raised his carbine; the princess saw the motion and thrust at him with her foot. He growled like a dog, but let the weapon fall again.

As they neared the bend Dick looked

at Edith.

"How do you feel?" he asked gen-

She raised her lovely face; its expression was that of a brave but horror-stricken child.

"I'm prepared for the worst, Dick. Dear old Jim!" Her voice choked.

Dick's pressure on her hand tightened. They passed around a projecting mass of sandstone and came suddenly upon Jim.

He was sitting with his back against a boulder and both long legs stretched to an amazing distance in front of him, calmly lighting a cigarette. Almost at his feet were two dead brigands, yataghan in hand. At some distance was another, half buried under a dead

Jim appeared to be bleeding from every part of his long frame. A scarf was knotted about one limb just above the knee. A handkerchief was bound about his head and another around his wrist. There were blood-stains on his chest and side.

"I heard your voices," said he cheerfully, "so I knew that you must be all right. A warm corner-for a beginner. Go easy, old girl; I'm all shot

Edith had dropped to her knees in the sand and flung her arms around his

"Anybody hurt, Dick?" asked Jim. "I see you got it in the shoulder."

"None of us," said Dick. "Don't know how the servants made out; all right, I guess; we didn't leave much of

that gang."

Jim's face fell. "I don't see why I didn't do better!" he complained. had nine shots and only bagged three. I met 'em right here, coming full jump. Everything was so mixed up I don't know what really happened until I found myself behind this rock, potting 'em as carefully as I could. What were they?"

His voice was growing faint. Dick did not answer; he was examining his "Bone broken?"
"No driven and the same mildly." friend's wounds.

"No, drilled right through." Dick's "That means modern face wrinkled. arms-yet they preferred steel! What the dickens-

Iim's head dropped forward and he

fainted.

"Mash Allah!" growled Kostovo. "These Anglo-Saxons! They are all fighters by nature—even the women! Tchk, tchk, tchk!" He looked thoughtful, then left the others and disappeared behind the rocks.

Jim presently revived, and a few moments later the servants came up leading four horses whose riders had been killed. They reported that they had been a considerable distance behind when they heard the firing and promptly got their weapons ready. The brigands, only five in number, three of whom appeared to be wounded, did not attack them, but fired three shots, then turned up a defile and disappeared.

As they were telling their story a gunshot rang out close at hand. Dick whipped up his Colt and looked around the projecting mass of rock. A hundred yards below was General Kostovo leaning over a wounded brigand. Telling the others to wait where they were, Dick plowed his way through the sand to join him.

Kostovo turned to Dick a very grim

face.

"It is as I feared. I have been questioning this man; that other was stubborn, so—" He tapped his carbine. "This is more of Hamdi's work! A plot to kidnap the princess! These men are more than brigands; they are of Hamdi's newly recruited corps of Montenegrins from the border. Hamdi intercepted my courier and sent these rascals to meet us instead of my Akindschis. He did not guess at the—eh—character of our party," he added grimly.

"The first blow!" growled Dick.
"The custom-house was merely a cur-

tain-raiser."

"He means to force our hand," said Kostovo.

"He means to checkmate our queen."
Kostovo pointed toward the east.
"Istria is behind those hills," said he,
"and the princess is here, and Karoz
and Hamdi are in between."

"Would he dare to seize her in

Karoz, do you think?"

"Hamdi would dare anything."
"What other route is there to Istria?"

"The only other route goes past Suruk; Hamdi has a palace there and a garrison. It is probable that every cow-path to Istria is watched. He is a thorough man."

"Wait a minute!" Dick scrambled to the top of a high sand-hill and studied the surrounding country through his glass. Far away on the Plain of Plev a large herd of horses was grazing; thousands of wild fowl were circling the lake; a windy swirl of smoke marked the hovel of some herder; a jackal was slinking off between two mounds. Aside from these, there were no signs of life. He slid down the side of the bank and rejoined Kostovo.

"Has the princess' maid got a yashmac and feridjé, do you think?" he

asked

"Probably; the maid must have a feridjé, and she could make a yashmac, or better, an all' antica from any piece of cloth. You mean——"

"Yes. I'll get a fez and kaftan and some shoes from the horse-boys, and

take the princess to Istria."

"Through Suruk?"
"That's best."

Kostovo looked doubtful. "Why not?" asked Dick,

"It weakens our party. Suppose

that we are attacked again?

"That makes no difference. These fellows that got away will report us a strong party, and the next time Hamdi will send an entire troop. Besides, Gordon is badly wounded, and we would surrender in any case. They don't want our lives; they want the princess, and when they found that she was not in the party they would probably clear out."

Kostovo nodded.

"Do you think that you can do it?"

"Why not? I speak the language. We'll take a couple of these horses, to lead. I'll be a wandering horse-trader."

"The plan seems good," said Kostovo slowly, "but-"

"But what?"

"There's the princess."

"Well?"

"She's proud! She's Karamanian! She will consider it beneath her dignity to return to her country by the back door, and beneath her caste to wear a servant's clothes."

"What rot!"

"That is true. But just the same, she will not do it!"

"She'll have to!" said Dick grimly.

#### CHAPTER III.

Dick swung in his saddle and observed the princess with a coldly critical eye. Her maid had constructed an all'antica, or face-cloth, having two holes for the eyes; this was pinned to the front of the chaf-chaf, or hood, in such a manner that when dropped it completely screened her face. The voluminous feridjé, designed by the Prophet to conceal all that was seductive in the figures of the women of the faithful, completely enveloped her, but the brisk wind sweeping down the gorge made rather a mockery of its ele-

vated purport.

The princess had thrown back her all' antica, and the face beneath it was far from being a tranquil one. Only the thinnest gleam of her light-colored eyes was visible between the double fringe of long, dark lashes; there was a crimson spot in either cheek which left the rest of her face a clear, pale olive, and her pretty lips were set rigidly. She sat her pony immobile as a carven image, regardless of the road, regardless of her companion, regardless even of the disorderly wind which sometimes blew the light feridjé above her knees, a detail of no consequence to the Turkish woman, who considers an exposure of the hands or face as far more immodest than that of the legs. The graceful limbs of the princess were encased in the heavy woolen stockings which formed a part of her disguise.

Dick scrutinized her with cold disapproval. To his way of thinking the mental attitude of his companion was inexcusable; an ill-timed demonstration of bad temper on the part of a spoiled

and pampered woman.

He himself was costumed in *kaftan* and *fez*, the latter with a *terk* twisted about it to hide his close-cropped hair. His heavy woolen trousers were caught about the hips by a sash through which was thrust a yataghan, and he wore a pair of sandallike shoes which he had taken from one of the horse-boys. Behind him he led two of the Montenegrin horses. In a country where the different races and nationalities are as mixed

as that through which they traveled he could have passed anywhere for an itinerant Balkan horse-trader.

Presently the road entered a narrow chasm which led up steeply, twisting and turning through the bare, rocky hills. Dick thrust his hand under his sash and loosened his big revolver in its holster. The princess noticed the act and her lips curled.

"Your ability as a hand-to-hand fighter is rather ahead of your general-

ship, is it not?" she asked.

"'Fraid so."

"As a professional soldier and strategist," continued the princess mercilessly, "don't you think that you are making rather a poor showing?"

"Well, rather-so far," admitted

Dick.

"There was the custom-house"—the princess' voice was withering—"which you watched them burn from behind the corner of the wall; then there was this ambush into which you innocently led your friends and myself, and now this silly masquerade!"

"The custom-house and the ambuscade were pretty bad, I'll admit. But what's the matter with this plan? Cos-

tume unbecoming?"

The blood poured into the princess'

ace.

"For a man who has fought with Turkish troops," said she, "it seems to me that you have learned very little of Turkish methods. You kindly do each time precisely what Hamdi expects you to do!"

"Wonder if he expected us to do what

we did to his Montenegrins."

"He had not counted on your friends; they were accidental."

"They were awful bad accidents for

those Johnnies."

"But to return to your own interesting tactics," pursued the princess cuttingly. "This dashing plan of yours for smuggling me into Istria disguised as a servant—"

"Drop your hood!" interrupted Dick curtly. "There's somebody on ahead!"

The path at this point wound up through a steep, boulder-strewn rift in the hills. A short distance ahead, toiling in and out among the rocks, was a file of men on foot. They wore the high, yellow kulah (cap), broad, pleated petticoats, and pelisses reaching almost to the knee. Some few carried musical instruments, and all were provided with the keshkool or staff of office. saw at a glance that they were dervishes of the Mevlevee, or dancing order.

As they overtook them he saluted the sheik, who responded gravely. They had almost passed when one of the younger dervishes made a remark directed toward the princess which, commonplace as it was from an Oriental point of view, brought the blood to Dick's face and a quick tension to his muscles. A titter of laughter followed the pleasantry, and at the same time Dick's ear caught a phrase from the lips of the princess, which if translated literally from the Turkish into English might be properly regarded as profane. He reined in slightly, until she came up abreast. Through the holes cut in the all' antica a pair of lurid eyes looked intently into his.

"I can't help it!" said he, with a sud-"What does it den, fierce impatience. matter? The main thing is to get you

to Istria!"

"No matter how much I may be in-

sulted en route?"

"What does a remark from a dancing dervish matter to a woman who is trying for a throne? Would you rather have Hamdi Pasha's hospitality? You know what that means! I tell you, my lady, that once inside Hamdi's hareemlick you'd find mighty little respect shown your exalted rank; and still less to your elevated ideas regarding your attitude toward a husband to whom you were not united by ties of love. Well?"

He swung in his saddle, for the princess had reined in her horse and was staring at him with such an intensity of fury that although her face was completely covered there was no mistaking the emotion which blazed from the openings cut for the eyes. Dick was seized by a sudden savage exasperation.

"Come along!" he said harshly. "You

have acted like a spoiled baby all day. Now play that you are grown up."

Before he could guess her purpose the princess had swung her pony in its tracks, struck it a sharp blow with the oak stick which Dick himself had that morning cut for her, and the next instant the animal was plunging down

For a moment Dick stared after her, then, dropping the halter-rope of his led horses he turned and rode back. Realizing that the princess was Karamanian born and rode some fifty pounds lighter than himself, he did not try to overtake her, but fortune favored him. The Mevlevee dervishes, hearing the clatter of hoofs and seeing the woman who had just passed them dashing down the dangerous slope, supposed that her horse had bolted. The gully was narrow, and the dervishes spreading quickly across it held their keshkools horizontally and shouted.

The half-tamed Arab stopped in its tracks, threw up its wild head and snorted; then as one of the dervishes waved his leopard-skin cloak it wheeled and bolted back to its companions. The next moment Dick's hand fell on the bridle-rein, snatched it from the princess' grasp, and threw it over the pony's head.

"Now," said he sternly, "we will have no more of this nonsense!"

The princess flung back her hood and her passion-riven face shone marblewhite against the black chaf-chaf. Her lips were parted over her even teeth and the pupils of her light-gray eyes were contracted to the merest pinpoints. Never before had Dick beheld such a devastating fury on the face of any woman.

"Let go!" she said, in a strangling

"Give me my rein!"

"Will you promise to be good and not try to run away?"

With a motion as quick as the blow of a leopard the princess' riding-crop flashed up and came down with all of the strength of her arm, just below Dick's elbow. His hold did not relax.

"Will you let go?" panted the prin-

Down came the stick again; had it been of any fragile wood it might have splintered from the force of the blow.

"Now will you?" She raised the

"I wouldn't do that," said Dick even-"That's my revolver-arm, and I may need it again before we get to Istria."

The stick dropped from the princess' hand; she jerked her head and the all' antica dropped over her face. Dick turned slowly and, leading her pony,

rode on up the trail.

At the top of the defile the road came out upon a broad, wind-swept plateau, the Plain of Plev, which stretches from the Kara or Black Hills in the north and east to where, some fifty miles away, the river Plev cuts its way through the southwestern barrier. Herds of cattle and horses were grazing as far as the eye could see. The wind was blowing in fierce gusts, and the purple shadows from the big cumulus clouds were racing across from the blue mountains to the eastward. Far in the distance were some scattered buildings, the dome of a large mosque and a pair of white, slender minarets standing out distinctly against the dull background.

"There is Suruk," said Dick, to himself rather than to the princess.

As they rode out upon the plain his trained eye was caught by a smear of black moving toward the town in a swirl of dust. Approaching nearer, he saw that it was another and larger band of dervishes which he immediately recognized from their costumes as belonging to the Rufa'ee, or howling sect. At their head walked the sheik, a tall man with a black turban and a black kaftan covering a long crimson robe. They were a wild, savage-looking lot of fanatics, and their gaunt, emaciated faces showed frightful scars from the self-inflicted mutilations practised as part of their revolting ritual.

"There is something in the wind," thought Dick, "to bring all of these beggars to this out-of-the-way little

place!"

Not a sound came from the princess. Still leading her pony and the two Montenegrin horses, Dick approached the town. As he drew near the mosque he observed with some disquiet that there was a great multitude of people moving about; booths and tents of every fantastic color and design had been erected, and the smoke from hundreds of little fires was swirling and eddying in all directions.

When they had almost reached the mosque a mollah began to cry the ascan from the top of a minaret. His wild, raucous voice was borne to the congregation on the flaws of the gusty

wind.

"Allah akbar! Ashadu an la ilaha illa 'llah!"

At the first outery the place began to swarm with life and motion. From the coffees and dwelling-houses and tents and booths and bazaars, from the mosque itself, a multicolored swarm of humanity came pushing and crowding and jostling out into the hot, windy sunshine. Dick reined up sharply and dismounted.

"Get down," he said.

The princess did not move. high wind was whipping the light feridjé about her in a manner to make the prophet Mohammed turn in his grave, but the princess sat stonily impassive. Dick stepped to the side of her pony, took her waist in both powerful hands, and lifted her from the saddle. A peculiar shudder ran through the girl.

"Kneel," he said, setting her down, The princess sank to the ground.

All about them the kneeling multitude was rising and falling in perfect rhythmic time with the motions of the Imam, the "one who bends," at each repetition of the name of Allah. For five minutes the devotions continued. Suddenly they ceased, and a fanatic leaped to his feet, sprang upon an araba, and raised his voice in a howl.

"Ahandu arma Mohammadan rasu-

lullah!"

Instantly a roar arose from the worshipers; a dervish leaped beside the first and began to clamor; something flashed above his head; the flash was mirrored in hundreds of gleaming blades which pierced upward like tongues of pallid flame. Above the uproar came a series of ringing wordsand all at once Dick understood.

"My word!" he gasped. "It's a holy

All became plain to him. Hamdi Pasha, taking advantage of General Kostovo's absence, or perhaps, even before his departure to England to fetch the princess, had sent emissaries far and near to incite the bloodthirsty, fanatical element of the region into declaring a holy war against the heretical Karamanians.

But this, Dick felt confident, could not be done at once. It would still take days for the hordes to gather, and there would have to be much praying and oratory and whirling and howling and dervish mummery before the Moslem rabble would be aroused to the proper pitch of frenzy or should have gathered sufficient strength to swarm on into the hills to massacre the subjects of the Princess Lilear.

"Here's a diehad declared against us," said Dick. "The situation is getting interesting; if it were to be discovered that we were Giaours we would not be alive three minutes. Don't you think it's about time to get over

your bad temper?"

Not a sign of life came from the girl. Dick shrugged his shoulders, then stooping over, picked her up in his arms and placed her in the saddle. Again the violent tremor ran through the yielding figure of the princess, but

she made no resistance.

Nobody noticed them as they picked their way through the throngs which filled the town. There were priests of every sect, and of such variety as is only to be found in the devotees of Islam. There were mu'azzins, or prayercriers, khatibs, the preachers, moakits, or winders of the clocks, turbhé-bachi, the keepers of tombs, an occasional ulema, or learned man, here and there a filthy santon, or holy man, often stark naked and covered with sores. Also there were mollahs without number. Most numerous of all were the dervishes, vultures always to be found where there is the prospect of infidel blood and infidel plunder. The different orders of these "beggars from door to door" were united for the only purpose for which they ever do unite, the destruction of heretics, although themselves the rankest of heretics from the teachings of Mohammed as written in the Koran. There were the Melevee, the Rufa'ee, the Dusookee, who do not bow down at prayer, the Kadirees, who pray walking each with his hands upon the shoulders of his neighbor, the scarlet-capped Bedawees, and countless others. The dancing dervishes had set up a tekkieh, and from within it came the sound of music and the shuffling of

Dick observed that with this rabble of Moslem priests there was also a fair sprinkling of Kurds, the fiercest, ugliest and stupidest of Ottoman subjects, the slaughterers of the Armenian Christians, and no doubt imported by Hamdi especially for the work in hand. One sign of recognition, one cry of "Giaour," and his life would not have been worth the unclean terk which en-

circled his fez.

The road to Istria led through the town and on past a small palace built of native marble standing in the middle of a parklike enclosure, the whole of which was encircled by a wall. They had almost reached the gates when there came the clear, high note of a Turkish bugle, and a moment later a cavalcade began to stream out upon the road, turning in the direction of the town. At the head rode a handsome, military figure in full Turkish uniform, . accompanied by two men, apparently Europeans and dressed in orthodox English riding-costume. Behind them came a troop of horsemen which Dick recognized with horror as belonging to the same corps of Montenegrin mercenaries as the people by whom they had been that morning attacked.

"Permit me to congratulate you on this last stroke of military genius, Osborne Pasha!" said a bitter voice. "Here comes Hamdi Pasha himself!"

"Hamdi, is it?" said Dick. "H'mph -we're trapped!"

"How very clever of you! But we've been trapped all the time."

Dick did not answer the taunt; his

mind was working swiftly.

"It's too late to bolt," said he, as if thinking aloud, "and there's no chance of my fooling Hamdi."

"There never has been any chance of your fooling Hamdi," said the princess scornfully. "You blunder in and blunder out again, and are always one thought behind.'

"Hope I can blunder out this time.

There's only one chance."

"To fight the whole troop?" asked the princess sarcastically.

"No, not fight, Bluff!"

The cavalcade was by this time very close. Dick and his companion were already under the keen, searching scrutiny of the Ottoman. Hamdi Pasha was a strikingly handsome man, tall, finely made, with a broad, intellectual forehead, deep, lustrous eyes, and a well-chiseled face which had in its expression nothing cruel or treacherous. No doubt from his Oriental view-point the means of warfare which he had employed were quite proper and legitimate; by the same code he would not have hesitated a moment at having Dick stabbed in the back and the princess escorted to the harcemlick of his palace there to become slave or kutchuk hanum as his fancy pleased. Treachery and cruelty and ruthless bloodshed are so much a part of Ottoman traditions as to be quite accepted as a necessity of Ottoman methods.

Hamdi Pasha, as he sat his magnificent Arab stallion, was an admirable figure; in his tall astrakan fez, his well cut military blouse trimmed with the same material, his smart German cavalry breeches, and his high-heeled French boots with their golden spurs, he had an air at once Oriental and European. One would have found it hard to believe that he had that morning issued an iradé giving over the dwellers of the Kara Hills to the vengeance, pillage and lust of his horde of Moslem fanatics, and in the same

nonchalant way given orders for the torture of a slave who had displeased

But what Hamdi would not have done, what would have been opposed to every fiber of his hot, Oriental nature, would have been to countenance the harming of a single hair of the head of a friend coming to claim his proffered hospitality. It was the knowledge of this trait of Ottoman character which furnished Dick with his cue. He rode straight toward Hamdi, who, seeing that he was about to be accosted, eyed him suspiciously, and let one hand drop to the butt of the revolver on his hip.

"Have I the honor of addressing his excellency, Hamdi Pasha?" asked Dick, in French, saluting stiffly at the same

time.

Hamdi raised his heavy eyebrows in surprise. The two Europeans, Germans apparently, stared.

"Who may you be?" demanded the

Ottoman.

"I am an American traveler."

"Indeed? Why are you dressed in that disguise?" asked Hamdi suspiciously.

"When you have heard what I have to tell you," said Dick sternly, "you

will understand."

"Speak, then!" "While traveling from Podoni to Karoz with my two friends, Mr. Gordon, of New York, and his sister, the Countess von Essingen-

"What!" interrupted Hamdi. leaned forward in his saddle.

"I say, that while traveling with my friends, Mr. Gordon and Countess von Essingen, from Podoni to Karoz," continued Dick impatiently, "through a country which we had been assured was perfectly safe--

"But-but I do not understand. You say that Mr. Gordon and his sister

were at Podoni?"

"Precisely. Mr. Gordon came there on his yacht intending to ride to Karoz, visit his friend, Hamdi Pasha, and then return by way of Saloniki where the yacht was to meet him. Instead of this, he is lying on the road where it strikes the Plain of Plev, wounded in four places by the bullets of his friend's somewhat irregular troopers in what appeared to be an attempt to kidnap the Countess von Essingen."

"To kidnap the countess," cried Hamdi, startled for the moment beyond his self-control. "You say it was the countess—" He checked himself, bi-

ting his full lower lip.

"Naturally it was the countess!" exclaimed Dick, with a gesture of impatience. "The news had evidently reached them from Podoni that a very rich American and his sister had arrived on a large steam-yacht and were riding to Karoz. It was an attempt to kidnap and demand a ransom!"

Hamdi Pasha nodded to himself, as if forced to admit the truth of the charge. His face wore an expression

of unutterable chagrin.

"There were also in our party," Dick continued, "a Karamanian horse-dealer and his niece, Monsieur and Mademoiselle Kostovo, residents of Karoz, I believe. The fact that the attack was directed almost entirely against Countess von Essingen and her brother proves that its sole object was to kidnap the countess—"

He was interrupted by a gust of rage

from Hamdi Pasha.

"Sapristi!" cried the Ottoman furiously. "But I would not have had this happen for the whole of this accursed country and all within it!" The blood rushed to his face and he broke into a torrent of French invective, from which he passed in turn to his own tongue, and delivered himself of such a flood of abuse as the Turkish language is able to provide. "These accursed descendants of many generations of unclean beasts! I will have them blinded with hot irons! Can they not tell the difference between an American lady and a Karamanian hillwoman!" He checked himself suddenly. His eyes flashed at Dick with quick suspicion.

"A litter would be of more assistance to our friends than bad talk," said Dick

curtly.

Hamdi scowled and seemed on the verge of a savage retort. He controlled himself, and said:

"Everything shall be done that is possible. But tell me first some more in regard to this affair. How is it that you were able to defend yourselves?"

"We were not taken entirely unprepared. Monsieur Kostovo had warned us that the country was a savage one, but assured us that with a party as large as ours there was not the slightest danger of attack."

"Sacré, cochons! How large was

your party?"

"Including Monsieur Kostovo's man servant and the steward and valet de chambre of Mr. Gordon, we were six, well armed. Although outnumbered, we were able to beat off these brigands; for I regret to say I can call them by no other name, particularly as after the first volley, directed toward Mr. Gordon, who was riding ahead at the time, they attacked us with only their yataghans."

Hamdi was gnawing at his lip.

"You did well. I congratulate you as much as I censure myself—and that is a great deal! I wish that you had slain them to a man! Except that in such a case it would deprive me of the gratification of punishing the survivors!" His eyes flashed toward the princess, who was a little behind Dick. "Who is that woman?" he asked.

"The maid of Mademoiselle Kostovo," said Dick indifferently. "It appears that she is a native of this country. I brought her to show me the road. And these"—he threw aside the halter-rope of the led horses—"belong to you, I believe. Monsieur Kostovo suggested my taking them that I might pass for a wandering horse-trader."

Hamdi Pasha scrutinized him keen-

ly.

"You are familiar with this country?" he asked. "You speak the lan-

guage?"

"I have been here to shoot, and I speak a little Arabic. But we are losing time! My friend is in a critical condition. With your permission I shall now return."

Hamdi Pasha held out a restraining hand. "But first you must rest and have some refreshment," he exclaimed. "In half an hour I will be ready and we will all go down together."

Dick bowed stiffly. "You are very kind," he said, in a cold voice, "but I would prefer to return at once. Mr. Gordon is in a very critical condition."

Hamdi scowled.

"As you wish," said he.

Saluting the others, Dick wheeled his horse and rode slowly toward the town, followed by the princess. Glancing back, as if to speak to her, he saw that Hamdi was standing where he had left him in the middle of the road.

The princess did not speak. rode through the town and on past the mosque. Once clear of the rabble about the building, Dick drew rein, dismounted, and proceeded to tighten the

girths.

"Now for a race," said he.

"To where?" asked the princess contemptuously.

"To the hills. To Istria." "That's twenty-five miles."

"The horses are good for it," said Dick. "They've got to be. Hamdi's not satisfied. He's thinking."

"He's still a thought ahead of you,"

snapped the princess.

"How?"

"He's Ottoman."

"Well, what if he is?"

"Oh, you-novice!" said the princess, with contempt. "I suppose that you think you have outwitted him. You have fooled him for the moment, but it will not last long.'

"It doesn't need to-if we ride more and talk less." Dick mounted. "It doesn't need to last for half an hour."

"It doesn't for Hamdi," snapped the princess.

"Why not?"

"Because, Mr. Soldier, he has got every rabbit track to Istria already watched. They will continue to be watched."

The idlers near-by were beginning to look at them curiously. Dick shook his reins and they moved off, circling the outskirts of the town.

"Where now?" asked the princess,

"We will make a détour around Hamdi's palace and strike the road higher up. How far is the river?"

"Three kilometers, perhaps.

"Kostovo said that there were only two places where we could cross," said Dick. "You think that they will both be watched?"

"Of course they will. Hamdi's no

fool."

"But we're disguised."

The princess laughed scornfully. "And to think that you resigned your commission from the army of your country because it gave so little play to your talents-your military genius.'

Dick flushed. "I never said thatbut never mind. You think that they'll

stop us?"

"Of course they'll stop us," said the princess. "How long, pray, is it going to take you to find out that Hamdi has declared war? Istria is blockaded."

"Gad!" said Dick. "You don't need

"I wish I were a man for about a day," exclaimed the princess.

"I wish that you were-for about ten minutes!" said Dick softly.

"You wouldn't be here if I were!"

"One of us would stay here, I'm afraid," said Dick.

The princess laughed. Dick grinned. "Let's go," said he.

"Where?" "To Istria."

"With Hamdi's troopers between? How?"

"On horseback."

"You are a wit as well as a strategist. We'll ride through them?"

"Through 'em or over 'em or around 'em. Let's go and see, unless"-he gathered up his reins, then turned and looked at the princess-"you prefer the harcemlick.'

"What does it matter? It is the harcemlick for me if we fail; we might as well try for Istria." She looked at him aslant. "But how about yourself? It's a shame to cut short a career of so great promise.'

"What does it matter?" Dick grinned. "It's a bullet for me if we fail; we might as well try for Istria."

They shook the reins, and their horses sprang forward, sweeping along with the light, springy stride for which they are famed and which they owe to their long pasterns and the broad, muscular shoulders peculiar to the breed. Where the European hunter gets power from his hind quarters the Karamanian horse employs his shoulders equally: there is something almost doglike in the action of one of these animals in running over broken ground, and especially in leaping, when he squats with his whole body before taking off. There is no horse which is his equal for hill-work, and such a condition as "over in the knees" is un-

They skirted the town, then cut into the road perhaps a mile beyond the palace-gates. Dick glanced at the trail. Many horses had traveled it, but in Karamania that meant nothing. Riding at a brisk gait, it was not long before they came in sight of the broad gulch across the plain cut by the river

Plev.

The road led directly up to the bank which was precipitous. A heavy growth of bushes made it impossible for them to look down into the dry river-bed, but they could see the opposite bank, which was also steep and cut by numerous fissures and erosions. The plain beyond was thickly covered with brush similar to that upon their own side.

"Listen!" said Dick, raising his hand.

They reined in their horses, and approached the brink at a walk. From the top the trail went down diagonally, screened by dense bushes all of the way. A vista of the river-bed upstream was visible; it was boulder-strewn, with broad pools of standing water and banks of cobbles and drifted sand.

As they stopped to listen the princess' horse raised his head and pricked up his ears. Dick tapped him on the nose with his stick.

"Don't let him neigh," he whispered.

"There is somebody below," said the princess in a low voice.

Suddenly there came from the riverbed the shrill squeal of a horse when nipped by a comrade. Again the princess' pony raised its head to whinny, but a quick tug of the rein prevented it.

Dick slipped from his saddle and

gave his rein to the girl.

"I'm going to reconnoiter," he said. Pushing his way through the bushes he soon reached the edge of the gully and was able to look down through a screen of dry foliage. Directly under him were a dozen or odd horsemen. All were dismounted, sitting or sprawling close against the bank for the sake of the thin margin of shade it offered from the midday sun. Their horses were clustered in a little bunch, their heads hanging low, half asleep. Many tracks in the bed of the river marked the course of the trail which led downstream for a short distance before ascending the opposite bank. The troopers themselves were of Hamdi Pasha's Montenegrin squadron.

But the feature which set Dick's usually normal pulse to pounding was the fact that a projection of the near bank completely hid from the troopers the point where the trail descended into the river-bed. A short distance above the river curved, and Dick saw at a glance that if they could steal quietly down, turning up-stream at the bottom and keeping in the loose sand close to the bank, they might pick their way along unseen until they found a spot where they could ascend the opposite side, which, it being low in places and deeply eroded, seemed very possible.

He stole quietly back to the princess. She had thrown aside the all' antica and her clear once face shone a marble—white against the black hood. Her eyes were half veiled by their long lashes and there were dark shadows un-

der them.

"Here comes Hamdi," she said, in a low voice, and made a gesture toward Suruk.

Behind them the sandy road led straight away for a long stretch, then curved around the base of the low hill on which stood Hamdi's palace. Beyond this hill a swirl of white dust swept up over the dull green band of

the olive-trees.

"You are right. That's a troop of horse traveling fast. He's found out that we turned back." He drew his big revolver.

"What now?" asked the princess

lifelessly.

"Go straight down to the river and turn up-stream. Keep as close to the bank as you can. Don't make a sound.

You go first."

The princess obeyed; they started down the slope, the horses' hoofs making no noise in the deep sand. At the bottom they stole quietly along the bank and had almost reached the bend when the princess' horse tossed its head and neighed.

"Run for it!" said Dick. "First chance you get go up the other bank

and ride!"

Glancing over his shoulder, he saw a trooper run out from behind the projecting bank, stare for a moment in his direction, and then rush for the horses with a shout. After him flocked the others; in a twinkling all were mounted and in pursuit.

The princess had darted ahead, her wiry little horse flying up the rockstrewn river-bed like an antelope. At every bound she distanced Dick, who

was hanging behind.

"Get up the bank the first chance!" he shouted after her. "Don't look

back!"

The Montenegrins were good-sized men on large horses; they were armed with carbines, but made no attempt to use them. Perhaps the pace was too hot; perhaps they had been instructed to capture their prisoners alive; most probably it was because of their natural preference for their own particular and hereditary weapon, the yataghan.

Dick swung in his saddle ready to shoot, his pony picking its way cleverly among the rocks with never a slip or stumble and no slackening of the pace. Seeing that his pursuers intended, like their comrades that same morning, to stick to the steel, he saved his fire for close quarters.

Up the river-bed they dashed, the wonderful horses leaping boulders and débris, splashing across the standing pools or plunging heavily through the soft sand and gravel. Sure-footed, as are all their breed, the pace was nevertheless too hot for the trail. A horse among the Montenegrins fell, flinging its rider against the rocks, another went down; neither of the men got up. A moment later one of the horses leading the pursuit went very lame, running almost on three legs. His rider checked him with a savage tug, leaped to the ground, unslung his carbine and fired, but the bullet flew wide.

The princess was rapidly increasing her lead; she was better mounted than any of the others and Karamanian, which is to say, a part of her horse. Two of the troopers were gaining on Dick, and the foremost when within a dozen yards began to unsling his carbine. As he was struggling to get the strap over his head Dick aimed between the pony's eyes and fired. The gully roared from the reverberation, and horse and rider plunged into one

of the standing pools.

Dick turned at a cry from the princess, and saw her swing her pony sharply toward the bank. The heat and dryness of the air had opened a diagonal crevice forming a little shelf which ran from the bottom to the top. As a path, it looked possible for a dog or a But the princess' mountain-sheep. pony did not hesitate an instant; up he went, skipping like a moufflon from side to side wherever a foothold was offered, reaching the top without mishap. On the brink the princess reined in and stood looking down upon the chase beneath.

"Ride for it!" yelled Dick, waving

his revolver.

Two of the Montenegrins had overhauled him; one, who had taken the other side of the gully, was galloping abreast, waiting for a chance to close in. Dick rose in his stirrups and fired, but his pony swerved in its tracks and he missed. He fired again, and saw the man sway in his saddle. A third shot brought down the pony. At the same moment there came a report almost in his ear, and he felt the wind of a bullet on his cheek. Swinging about, he fired pointblank into the chest of a large man whose horse's head was almost at his elbow, and saw the trooper's eyes open wide as he gripped the wound with both hands and pitched out of the saddle.

Then Dick put his pony at the rift in the bank and the game little beast went at it like a cat, clawing his way up in a shower of loose clay and stones. But there were some fifty pounds of difference in the weights of Dick and the princess. Half-way to the top the shelf began to cave; he felt it going and flung himself out of the saddle, landing a-sprawl on the steep bank while the pony slid back into the gully on the top of a small avalanche.

Panting and breathless, Dick scrambled to the top, running back from the edge as the troopers coming rapidly upstream began to fire. In the tumble the revolver had flown from his hand, leaving him weaponless except for the yataghan shoved through his sash.

The princess had waited. Her face was pale and her light eyes almost

"Get up behind me," said she. "No, I won't!" panted Dick. "You ride for it!"

"What will you do?" "No matter. I'll stop here."
"Surrender?"

"Yes."

The princess laughed mirthlessly. "Do you think they would take you alive-now?" she asked, with contempt.
"I dunno. That's my lookout. You

go on, d'ye hear?"

The princess looked at him through her half-closed lids. There was a crimson spot in either cheek.

"I prefer to stay."

Dick looked at her angrily.

"You do, hey?" He peered down into the gully; the Montenegrins were riding back at a gallop, leaving two men on guard.

"Don't be a fool!" cried the prin-

cess. "Or at least, don't be any more of a fool than you can help. We've got

five minutes' start. Get up behind."
"It's no good. They'd catch us in three kilometers. That pony isn't up to carrying double. Thanks all the same. But for heaven's sake, go! You can make it easily alone.'

"I prefer to stay."

"But why, for the Lord's sake?" "Can't you guess?" The princess' voice was like ice.

"No-unless you want to see me killed."

"That's it!"

Dick shrugged, turned away, threw out both hands, and spat on the

"Oh, all right. I guess you belong in

the hareemlick after all.'

From down the gully a bugle rang out, faint but clear. Dick paused to listen. Both looked in that direction and saw a great swirl of dust eddying above the tops of the bushes. His face

"You won't have long to wait," said "Here comes Hamdi."

"And you will not get up behind?" "No, thank you. I wouldn't now at any price. It would be a mean trick to spoil your fun.'

"You know what to expect from

Hamdi," said the princess.

"Yes. So do you, don't you?" A flame leaped from the girl's light eyes; she gripped her crop, half raising it as if to strike. Dick gave a short

"Go ahead," said he. "Countess von Essingen said that you'd beat me be-

fore the day was over."

"She said that?" demanded the princess furiously.

"Gad, she did—and she was right!" "I will beat you!" she cried, and struck at him with the stick. Dick twisted it from her hand.

"How do you dar're?" cried the girl stranglingly, and at the words Dick saw a vivid picture of their past. To him there came, as it had to the princess at their second meeting, the vision of a grape-arbor through which the warm Swiss sunlight was filtered in

bands of gold. He saw the slim, whitefaced, lurid-eyed, passion-riven figure of a girl, her smoke-colored hair in fine curling wisps about her broad forehead, her white teeth flashing; and heard the same words; "How do you dar're give me my v'vip! I am the Princess Lilear!"

He said now, as he had said then: "You may be the Princess Lilear—but you're an awful litle goose!" Then he added: "Ride along; there's a good girl. I was a fool to take you seriously. Listen!"

Again the distant bugle rang out. The princess had turned her shoulder to him.

"Wish I had my gun," said Dick wistfully. "There's a lot I'd like to do for brother Hamdi before I quit." He peered cautiously over the edge of the bank. "But there are a couple of Johnnies down there!"

Suddenly a shadow crossed his weather-hardened face. He drew the yataghan from his sash and turned to the princess.

"Here they come! For God's sake, ride along!" he cried.

## CHAPTER IV.

The troop of Razamachi's Akindschis, sixty strong, jogging easily on the road to Podoni, just two days late, thanks to the thoroughness of Hamdi Pasha, fell in with General Kostovo and his party not far from the scene of the attack by Hamdi's Montenegrins.

Leaving half of the force under their colonel, Razamachi Bey, to act as an escort to the Countess von Essingen and her wounded brother, Kostovo himself, at the head of the other half, had swept like a whirlwind up the valley on the trail of the Princess Lilear.

Almost to Suruk they fell in with Hamdi Pasha and his troop riding to the relief of his victims. The strength of Hamdi's force far exceeded that of his adversary, but the Ottoman, his dish being not yet cooked, advanced alone to parley with the rugged old hillman, and Kostovo, seeing himself outnumbered and anxious for the safe-

ty of the princess, accepted with a hidden grin the apologies of the other for all that had occurred and his violent protestations that the attack was entirely without his knowledge and sanction.

All of this, Kostovo took as one takes a nauseous but necessary drug, but he strongly advised Hamdi to abandon his relief expedition, saying that it would be certain to precipitate a conflict between his troop and that of Razamachi.

The Ottoman, having important affairs on hand in Karoz, whither he was setting out when met by the princess and Dick, and more than suspecting his simple-minded old adversary of giving this advice because he wished him to do the opposite, held on therefore to Karoz, leaving Razamachi Bey to conduct his party in peace to Istria. Hamdi felt that the situation lay within the hollow of his hand and that if properly managed Karamania might be his without the striking of a blow.

General Kostovo, holding his wild Karamanians with much difficulty from flying at the throats of their hereditary foes, resumed his march, secretly wondering what extraordinary string of lies Dick had told to Hamdi, and admiring the cleverness which had kept the wily Turk from guessing the

identity of the princess.

Without drawing rein he swept through Suruk, scattering the howling and dancing and praying fanatics like rats before a pack of terriers, and although Razamachi had already informed him as to the *djchad* which was afoot, his heart sank as he quickly estimated the numerical strength of the Moslem horde.

Before the scattered devotees of Islam knew that a troop of the heretics whom they were gathering to slay was in their midst, the Akindschis were gone again, leaving only a few wrecked and scattered booths—sheer mischief on the part of the brown, wiry little troopers—and a score of dervishes howling for other reasons than those of their ritual.

Almost to the sunken bed of the Plev, the sound of distant firing had reached their ears, and on arriving at the gully they met the Montenegrins picking their way back among the stones to take up the chase on the plain beyond. Kostovo, guessing instinctively what was afoot, had loosed his swift riders on these and left not one man alive.

So it was the clear, distant note of the Akindschis' bugle instead of Hamdi's which had reached Dick's ears as he stood, grim-faced and yataghan in hand, awaiting the final struggle in which he knew no quarter would be When a moment later, there came the noise of a faint but rapid fusillade he was sorely puzzled.

"Now, what the deuce is that?" he

said to himself, but aloud.

The princess, sitting her pony tensely, looked at him with a bitter smile.

"I think you've blundered out again," said she.

Dick's face turned very pale under its tan.

"You mean-" he began thickly,

then stopped. "It's not probable that they're fighting among themselves," said the prin-

cess. Three quick reports rang out from the gully beneath. There came a rattle among the stones. Peering over the edge, Dick saw two Montenegrin

troopers, who had been stationed there,

aim and fire down-stream. The next instant they had wheeled their horses and dashed up the river-bed and out of Ouickly following, came the crash and clatter of flying hoofs; three small, brown, wiry troopers swept up the gulch, their superb horses spring-

ing among the stones like running deer.

Hot on their heels came another, who, to Dick's amazement, suddenly whipped up his short carbine and apparently regardless of the fearful pace and the dangerous character of the trail dropped his rein on his horse's neck and poising himself beautifully, opened a hot fire upon the fugitives. Then in a second they were gone and farther up the gully echoed with the ring of scampering hoofs and the detonations of the carbine.

"The Akindschis!" cried the princess. "Razamachi's Akindschis!"

"My word!" gasped Dick. riding!"

"They're Karamanians."

"They're wonders," he answered. "Are they all like that?"

"A thousand of them," said the princess proudly.

"We had that last fight for nothing,"

"Never mind; you blundered out, but —but I'm glad." She turned her face

"War," said Dick, "is a series of blunders. Successful war is a series

of successful blunders."

The princess did not answer. Dick had expected to hear, "Then you ought to be successful," or some similar remark. He glanced at her quickly; the princess' shoulders were moving convulsively. It struck Dick with a shock of some peculiar emotion that, after all, she was only a woman who had just passed through a frightful ordeal.

He stepped to the side of her pony. "I've been a brute," he said. "Don't

cry. I'm sorry."

The princess did not look at him, but

her shoulders stopped shaking.

"I think," said Dick slowly, "that you are the pluckiest and gamest woman in the world. I'm proud to be in your service, even if you are not proud to have me.'

The princess' head turned slowly; her long eyes looked at him aslant.

"Of course you hate me," she said, with an indifference which was not quite real. "You say that to please me. In your heart you think that I am what Hamdi said, 'a Karamanian hill-woman.' "

"I think that you are a wonder," said Dick. "I don't hate you. Neither do you hate me. You have a hot temper and you were furiously angry with me, but you did not want to see me killed. I know. You stopped here because you would not leave me to finish alone. Your sort don't run away from a comrade. We have both been very foolish, but we've been through two tight places to-day. Let's be friends.'

The princess tried to speak but failed. Suddenly she looked up.

"Here they come!" she cried, and there was a joyous lilt in her voice, which for some peculiar reason brought the color to Dick's face.

"Will you be friends?" he asked. "Yes," answered the princess swiftly and in a low voice. She gave him

her hand.

"American men do sometimes kiss girls' hands," said Dick, with a smile, and brushed it with his lips. Their eyes met and the color rushed to the faces of both.

"Look!" cried the princess, pointing

with her crop.

A squad of the Akindschis was coming toward them at a gallop. Ahead of them rode Kostovo, who, as he sighted the princess, threw up his arms with a shout, then turned and spoke to his bugler. The young man fell out of ranks, reined in sharply, and raising his bugle to his lips sent the "rally ringing out across the plain.

"Bravo!" cried Kostovo. "You're found. You're unhurt? I knew you couldn't be far. My men are scattered looking for you."

"You came in the nick of time," said Dick. "They had my horse and my

gun."

Kostovo laughed. "Like the old days," said he, "when we hunted brigands together and once or twice

got hunted-yes?"

There came the clatter of hoofs beneath, and they looked down to see the four Akindschis returning. They were driving two riderless horses ahead of them, and on the saddle of one there was a broad smear of blood. Being Karamanian, the princess did not shud-

"Did Hamdi let you pass without a

fight?" asked Dick.

Kostovo growled. "Yes. He outnumbered us two to one, and I was anxious about you two or there might have been a discord."

"And Suruk?" asked the princess.

"Those dogs are howling yet; my boys came through them roughly-but what a lot of them there are! Tchk, tchk, tchk!" His swarthy face became

For a few minutes they talked, until the searching squads had all come

"And now," said Kostovo, "for Istria.'

Dick mounted one of the captured horses and they started, traveling

swiftly across the plain.

"If Hamdi takes the trail after his friends," said Kostovo, "there will be a fight. Colonel Razamachi Bey is an impetuous man. Between you and me, he is not quite civilized. He would be outnumbered almost two to one.'

"These Montenegrins would be useful fighting-men," said Dick, "if one could make them use something beside

Kostovo nodded. "They love the vataghan," said he. "Knowing that, we have trained our Akindschis to use their carbines and revolvers." He swung in his saddle, glanced back at his command, then turned to Dick with a glow of pride. "Look at them," said he, "they are the finest cavalry in Europe or Asia; I don't know your cowboys or the Canadian police; whatever the men, I will wager that they are not mounted as beautifully as my Akindschis! There have been no soldiers so mounted since the staff of Alexander the Great. They could ride fifty miles, fight a battle, and ride back again. Their horses are picked from the whole country, and there are a great many horses in Karamania."

"I have felt better about our cause since I saw them ride up that river-

bed," said Dick.

"The men are intelligent, and like most small, quick people, very good shots. They are not bigoted like the Montenegrins who forget their carbines and will fight with nothing but the steel because their fathers fought so before them. The Akindschis shoot naturally." He groaned. "If only we had not lost all of that ammunition. I will not dare to tell them that there is scarcely ammunition for two days of fighting.

"Don't tell them!" said Dick sharp-

ly. "Tell the officers, of course, but don't tell the men. They would be beaten before the start."

It was late in the afternoon when the cavalcade rode into Istria. The town is high in the hills, built of a white native marble, and when the afternoon sun is shining full upon it can be seen as a gleaming silver spot against the brown of the mountains as far as Karoz, twenty miles across the plain

The palace is built within the walls of the old Genoese château, the greater part of which is still in an admirable state of preservation. The keep is almost intact, and four of the great towers are standing; the ramparts and dry moat have always been kept in a

state of repair.

The new palace, which is built of marble and is the only part used as a dwelling, rests against the outer wall; between it and the entrance the whole enclosure is planted in olive-trees with grape-arbors and flower-beds, the freshest, sweetest spot in all of Karamania. At the foot of the hill, just under the shadow of the fortress walls, are some ancient barracks, at the present time occupied by the Akindschis. The town itself is on a slightly lower level than the castle, and through its center flows one of the few streams in the country which endure throughout the summer months.

The morning after their arrival, as Dick was returning through the garden from a visit to the barracks made with General Kostovo, he found Edith standing by a little fountain under the

olive-trees.

"How is Jim?" he asked when he had greeted her. "Doing well?"

"I'm sure of it. He does nothing but swear. Coming here yesterday after that dreadful fight, he was so crazy over the troopers who escorted us that it gave him fever."

"It's a good thing he's out of mis-

chief.'

Edith laughed. "The Greek doctor whom Hamdi Pasha sent up from Karoz says that there will be no fighting."

"Why not?"

"Because, my filibustering young friend," said Edith, looking straight into his eyes, "it appears that the Karamanians have suffered a great blow in the loss of all of their ammunition for the campaign, which was destroyed in a fire of the custom-house at Podoni."

Dick grinned. "Hamdi's giving that

out, is he?"

"And so, Dicky, you won't have to marry your princess, after all."

"Eh, what!"

Edith's nymphlike face was alive with mischief. "Don't pretend, Dicky-bird; I know all about it. Kostovo told me yesterday after you two had gone." She laughed. "It really wasn't fair to pump the simple-hearted old chap but—I wanted to know. Besides, he really did not have to be pumped; he siphoned."

Dick laughed vexedly. "The driveling old fool!" was his polite comment.

Edith looked at him searchingly. "Tell me, Dick, dear, you're not really going to fight, are you?"

"We certainly are."

"When?" asked Edith, her face a shade paler.

"I can't tell."

Edith's eyes half closed; she pushed a pebble into the fountain with the toe of her slipper.

"Then you'll have to marry the prin-

cess?

"Somebody's got to marry her. The sheiks won't have her for queen without. They're afraid she might marry Hamdi, I guess, or some other nice gentleman like him; some of this rotten Servian gang, perhaps. At any rate, she's got to be married."

Edith looked at him narrowly.

"I knew you liked danger, Dicky, but I didn't think that you were as keen for it as that."

"Oh, pshaw! It's just a bluff to fool the sheiks. If our movement is successful Kostovo's first act will be to find her a husband."

"But suppose you fail?"

Dick grinned. "Then the ceremony is null and void, because, you see, I

would only be the proxy of somebody

who does not exist.

"But I don't see it at all. Better let that part of it alone, Dicky; it's more dangerous than the other."

"I believe you. She hates me like

the devil.'

"Really?" Their long lashes half hid Edith's hazel eyes. She was watching Dick without looking at him.

"What makes you think so?"

"Straws," said Dick, with a grin, "show which way the wind blows. You said that she would beat me before the day was done. You are a clever woman. Look at that." He rolled back his khaki sleeve, baring a big-boned forearm. Across the clean-cut, bulging muscles ran two dark discolorations and the whole arm was slightly swol-

A savage little gleam shone from Edith's eyes; then the color rushed into her face and she threw back her head

and laughed.

"The little savage! Her English civilization is only skin-deep, after all. She's Oriental and that's a different race, really. Was she in such a rage?"

"It was rather more than pique." "So you think that she hates you." "That arm is not a mark of affec-

tion. In the last scrimmage I got unhorsed scrambling up a bank and lost my gun in the shuffle. She had plenty of time to get away but she wouldn't

"Why?"

"She said she wanted to see me killed. For a second she meant it.'

"The savage!" Edith reached for Dick's arm, still bare, and passed her cool hands gently over the bruises.

"Orientals, no matter where educated, never become quite civilized, my

dear. There's Hamdi."

"Hamdi's a Turcoman." Dick moved his arm restlessly, but Edith still held it in her small, firm hand.

"She's practically the same."

"Not exactly. Not at all, in fact, Hamdi's forefathers came from Asia Minor: hers came from Southern Europe. She's fierce and warm, but not crafty and cold-blooded."

"But she's cruel." Edith ran her fingers gently over the bruises and looked up at Dick. His eyes met hers; the color crept into his face. Edith's ever-varying expression changed again; her long lashes swept up, her face grew rosy. Her seductive mouth was half open, lips apart, showing both rows of perfect teeth. The hazel eyes were Gervex could have found no better study for one of his woodnymphs.

"Why do you look at me so, Dicky?"

she murmured.

"I don't know," he answered almost roughly. "You're a siren. No wonder you leave trouble in your trail. You ought to be locked up."

"Dick, dear!" Her face was still that of the nymph, now grieving at the

death of a flower.

"You can't help it, I suppose." . "What are you talking about, Dicky?"

"You know well enough. Be frank

for once.'

Mischief chased grief from the face of the nymph.

"I will, Dick. I can't always keep from showing when I feel things."

"Such as-

"Sympathy"—the mischievous face grew suddenly intense—"and the man in you! You make me feel-feminine. What's the use of pretending? always have done so. You're the only man who ever has, or ever could."

"And yet you married the count." "Wise women don't marry for that,

Dicky."

"Well, then-

"Oh, dear!" Edith's low voice was despairing. "You're not a man at all! You're a Gatling gun. You might kill a man-a lot of men-but you couldn't love a woman. You're a splendid fighter, Dicky-bird, but you'd be an awfully poor lover." She looked at him intently. "You haven't the right colored eyes for a lover, you know; they're cold, a bit cruel, soldier's eyes, like Kitchener's. Then you are a bit of a brute, you know. I wonder if there is any tenderness in you." She looked at him pensively.

"Don't know. You had a chance to find out, but you wanted a coronet more. Now, I'm about to be married to a crown and"—he grinned—"I expect my head will rest damn uneasy."

Edith burst into a laugh. She turned her face up to him with her most mischievous and inviting expression. They were quite hidden in the

"Oh, you great boy! Will you never grow up? No wonder your poor princess is puzzled and angry and whacks you with a stick. Sometimes I'm tempted to whack you myself." She laid her hand on either of his shoulders and looked up into his face, chin tilted and lips curved in a teasing smile. "Tell me honestly, Dicky—you may lie if you like, because I'm sure to know—aren't you just the least bit, just a wee bit épris of your princess?"

Dick glanced down at the tempting face. His breath came quickly. Edith felt it and laughed caressingly.

"There, you see," she said, "the mere mention of her makes your heart throb; and you're getting really pale, Dicky—for you!" She laughed again, looking at him with up-curved lips and misty, half-closed eyes. "Now you're beginning to blush! Blush away, Dicky, you look so nice! So you really do think that she is rather fascinating? So do I. But she's an Oriental, Dicky; she wouldn't understand chivalry. Try whipping her." She threw back her head and laughed, showing her pretty round throat.

Dick made a brusk movement to free his shoulders from the clasp of her two strong little hands, but she clung tight-

"Not till you confess, Dicky-bird." Her voice was very low and the expression of her eyes almost bacchanalian; they suggested a tryst in the green-wood with the smell of ferns and the ripple of clear water; the freshness of her was like a bank of wood-violets. "Come, Dicky," she said, "do you like her very much? Answer and I'll let you go."

"Don't be silly!" snapped Dick. He

took both of her bare forearms in his hands and pushed her away.

All of the mischief, and something else, flooded Edith's face again.

"Poor Dicky! So shocked and embarrassed, and I to be teasing him!" She looked at him with an expression of mock pity and as he freed her arms, she clasped her small hands and tilted her head slightly to one side. "I'm so sorry."

"Then go away."

"Do you love your princess?"

"No; and she hates me as a dervish hates a bath."

"Oh, I'm so glad!" The nymph flew back again. The upturned face dimpled and the pretty lips puckered. "If that is true you may kiss me, Dicky."

"I don't want to kiss you."

"Yes, you do; and I want to be kissed."

"You ought to be spanked! Go away!"

"I will not." Edith glanced about to see that there was no one in sight and the next instant found herself in his arms, crushed, breathless, half stifled in a caress so rough and savage as to seem careless if it left her bruised, disheveled and smothered. Yet, even while fighting for her breath, she made no effort to escape. Then suddenly she felt herself free again, tottering on her feet, swaying giddily, while Dick, rather pale, stood with folded arms and a smile lurking under his long mustache, regarding her maliciously.

"There!" said he. "Now are you satisfied?"

Edith looked at him ruefully; she wore the expression of a nymph who had carried a greenwood jest too far. She passed her delicate hand lightly over herself; there was a look of mock anxiety upon her charming face.

"Anything broken?" asked Dick.
"No, my dear; nothing but a collarbone and three ribs!" She burst into a laugh. "You're less cold than I thought you were, aren't you, Dicky-mine?"

"I can be quite torrid when improperly stoked. Better leave it alone." "I shall." She tilted her head. "Is

my face on straight?"

"Yes, but it won't be if you stand there and look at me like that. Now

run along."

There was the sound of approaching steps and General Kostovo appeared, coming up the path through the olive-

"We are to have a visitor to-day," he said, after greeting them. "You would never guess who it is that is coming." "Hamdi Pasha?" asked Edith.

Kostovo looked at her in surprise. "But how did you ever guess?"

"Instinct."

"You are right; Hamdi is coming. Last night he sent a courier from Karoz, asking that he might be granted safe conduct to call and make his apologies to all of us for the unfortunate 'accident' which befell us on the road." The old fellow grinned.

"And you gave it?" growled Dick. "Yes. To tell the truth, I thought it just as well to keep up the pretense

of friendly relations as long as possible." He glanced at Edith. "Countess von Essingen is one of us now."

Dick flushed, but said nothing.

Early in the afternoon Hamdi Pasha made his call. There was quite a large party taking coffee in the garden of the palace when he arrived; a party which included Colonel Razamachi, several of the other officers and friends of the princess, for there is nothing Turkish in the social customs of the Karamanians, whose women occupy the relative position of Europeans in their society.

No trace of conscious guilt was apparent in the manner of the splendidlooking Ottoman as, escorted by General Kostovo, he approached the group. Stepping in front of the princess, he bowed low, touched his fingers to the path, then raised them to his forehead, his mouth, his heart, carrying out so much in full the idea of the picturesque Turkish salutation as to leave visible particles of dust at each of these cardinal points.

"I have come," he said, in his rich voice, speaking in perfect French, "not to ask forgiveness, which would be too much, but to offer my poor body in reparation for the wrongs done by my followers.'

"It would have been difficult for us to believe," said the princess, "that his excellency, Hamdi Pasha, should knowingly offer such a welcome to his neighbors, as well as to guests and strangers in Karamania."

Hamdi renewed his protestations,

volubly.

"As to the last attack," he concluded, "of which I am very loath to speak, that was a mischance for which I feel scarcely to blame. Had the person who escorted Princess Lilear"-his fine eyes rested malevolently upon Dick-"been frank with me concerning the identity of his companion, I should, of course, have supplied an escort, which would have insured her safe conduct. outposts stationed in the ravine were there to turn back any of the Mohammedan element who have gathered in Suruk for a religious festival, and who I feared might be tempted to do some mischief to my unorthodox neighbors. None the less, their mistake was of course deplorable."

"It does not matter," said Dick grimly, "they will not make it again."

Hamdi did not seem to hear. turned to Edith.

"Dear Countess von Essingen, can you ever forgive me? And your brother, my dear friend Gordon? Tell me that his condition is not serious and relieve me of a terrible suspense.'

"It is hard to forgive such a blunder, Hamdi Pasha," said Edith. "My brother is doing very well. The doctor whom you so thoughtfully sent from Karoz assures us that he is in no danger."

After a few moments of conversation, Hamdi asked if he might see the wounded man, and Edith conducted him to her brother's apartment which was in a wing of the palace, commanding a magnificent view of the Plains of Karoz. Half an hour later, when they returned to the garden, Edith paused at the head of the path.

"Tell me," she said quickly, "are you really going to fight?"

Hamdi turned to her with the most perfect assumption of utter lack of comprehension upon his inscrutable, Oriental face.

"But, my dear countess," he began.

"Nonsense!" interrupted Edith, in a fierce little voice. "I know the situation. My brother and I have no wish to be cut to pieces here by your Mohammedan fanatics from Suruk."

Hamdi threw out his hands. "Nor I to have you," he continued, speaking rapidly. "I did not anticipate any fighting until I learned the identity of Osborne Pasha. He is well known in Macedonia, and if he is in command here we will not get through without a struggle, unless—" He shot a quick, analytic glance at Edith.

"Unless what?"

"Unless I can obtain the custody of the Princess Lilear."

And what then?" asked Edith tense-

"There would be no uprising."

"You are sure?"

"There is no doubt. She is the last of the Karamanian ruling family. This old Kostovo would have no cause, and as it is, they are crippled and almost without ammunition. The whole thing would crumble."

"And many lives would be saved,"

said Edith thoughtfully.

Hamdi's eyes flashed. "Perfectly," said he. "It would avoid much bloodshed."

"If you were to obtain custody of the princess," asked Edith, "what would you do with her? Tell me the truth."

"I would send her immediately out of the country with a warning not to come back. Then I could take good care to see that she did not return for the next twelve months. After that it would not matter."

-" Edith began. "If I were sure-

A quick flash of intelligence crossed Hamdi's face. He leaned slightly toward her.

"It is in your power, Countess von Essingen," said he, "to prevent much unnecessary bloodshed."

"But what could I do? What do you

"If to-night," said Hamdi, dropping his voice, "you could persuade the princess to walk with you to the far end of this enclosure-

"No! no!" said Edith, with a shud-

"To walk down to the northwest The view from the top of it tower. should be very fine. One sees the plain sleeping far beneath in the starlight and the lights of Karoz sparkling against the dark mountains beyond. One really does not need to ascend the tower"-his voice, rich, deep, almost caressing, grew lower in tone-"there is a little door in the wall beside the tower which looks out directly over the valley. There is a steep path leading down from it.'

Edith shuddered.

"It would be treachery." "It would be a treachery which would save a great many lives, among them those of General Kostovo and Osborne

Pasha." "Perhaps."

"The chances are strongly against Osborne Pasha."

"That's when we Anglo-Saxons fight best."

"Allah! I believe you! But one can't fight treachery."

Edith flushed. "Whose treachery?" she asked.

"These Karamanians are wild cattle; they will not be driven for long by a foreigner. They will turn and gore him.

"He is a good driver. He can take care of himself. But what of the princess?"

"A girl like that to rule these folk! Bah!

"But if she were in your keeping, dear Hamdi Pasha?"

Hamdi threw out both hands.

"No harm shall come to her. she leaves the country she will be in my harcemlick under safe guard."

'Against Hamdi Pasha?" "Sapristi! For myself, I would far rather that she were in England than in my palace. She is the core of the discord. Besides, if any harm came to her through me I would not live to see another sunset. You need have no

Edith studied the toe of her slipper. "Come, dear countess," said Hamdi, "they are looking this way. Be reasonable and save your friends from the results of their folly. Just a walk in the garden, near the northwest tower, between dark and midnight-"

Edith turned away, then glanced at him over her shoulder.

"I will try," said she,

At eleven o'clock that night there was to be a council of war. General Kostovo had already demonstrated to his compatriots the advantages to be derived from the services of so trained and experienced a campaigner as Osborne Pasha. He had told them also that unless Dick were given absolute command of the Karamanian forces, he would refuse to have anything to do with the affair and would leave the country forthwith. This argument, backed by the mutual jealousy existing among themselves, had finally carried the day. The question of the princess' marriage was not raised; all present well knew the real motive of the Mohammedan gathering at Suruk; there was no longer any alternative but to fight; the future dynasty would have to be adjusted later.

After dinner Dick spent an hour with Kostovo, who primed him regarding the internal affairs of the country and the dispositions of the leading Karamanians, to all of which he listened attentively, asking but few questions.

"We will meet here, then, at eleven," said Kostovo, their interview finished.

Dick nodded, and rising went out into the garden. The night was clear but without a moon, and a great host of stars shone brightly in a sky of the deepest tourmalin, for in Karamania the heavens hold their depth of color throughout the night.

A white-clad figure was standing by the fountain. Walking in that direction, Dick came upon the princess alone, looking into the clear pool.

"Will you let me join you, princess?" he asked.

"Yes, if you wish, Osborne Pasha," she answered, still looking into the

"Are you trying to read the future?" He stepped to her elbow and looked into the water. "The Indian priests see pictures in places like that. What do you see?"

The princess shuddered.

"I see blood," she answered.

Dick did not at once answer; then he

"Yes. I am afraid that there will be some blood."

The princess' dark eyes seemed to glow at him through the darkness.

"Do you think that it is worth it?" she asked. "Or hadn't you thought of that part of it?

"I've thought a lot about it," Dick answered slowly. "If it were only for a crown or a monarchy or some selfish thing like that it would not be worth it. I would not fight for it. It would make me no better than a hired killer. But it's more."

"Yes," said the princess, "and it's inevitable."

"It's for civilization. Turkey is being dismembered; it's bound to be dismembered. It's a clog to the surrounding civilization. The whole past history of the nation is not merely written in blood like that of all nations more or less, but fairly swims in blood. Think of the slaughter that's attended every new dynasty, every new monarch for that matter. Think of the slaughter committed by the janizaries, and then the slaughter of themselves, twenty thousand of them within two or three days.'

"That's Islam."

"Yes: Hamdi's a Turcoman; if he gets Karamania the killing is only begun. If we can manage it, it's over. And what there is will be in clean warfare, and not through spite and greed and fanaticism and sheer bloodthirstiness. Yes, it's worth it."

There was a silence which lasted for Then the princess several minutes. said:

"I have not been fair to you."

"You thought that all I cared about was a fight?"

"Almost that."

"We're quits, I guess. I thought that you only cared for your crown. What will you do when you get it?"

"If I get it?" asked the princess.
"No, when you get it. We'll get it for you."

"I shall wear a cross on it." The princess dropped her head.

"You'll make your nation Christian?"

"Yes. My people are Christian at heart. They're open-hearted. They're liberal."

"They laugh."

"They would be Christians now if it were not for their hatred of the Bulgarians of that faith. Since the Bulgarian Christians have refused to recognize the Ecumenical Patriarch they and the Macedonian Christians do nothing but cut each other's throats."

"You can't stop that."

"Kostovo will stop it. He is strongly anti-Mohammedan. There's not much that a woman can do, is there?" Dick looked at her thoughtfully.

"No," he answered, "not in a country like this. It needs a man, a native. That's the only thing——" He paused.

"Yes."
"That's what I hate about it all; I mean, putting you in and leaving you to handle a problem like that."

"Why?" asked the princess softly.

"I don't want you martyred."
"What do you care?"

"Don't talk like that," said Dick sharply, "Of course I care. I care a whole lot."

The princess laughed, but with a certain effort.

"Do you? You would not have cared yesterday."

"Yes, I would have," growled Dick.
"Even when I—when I struck you?"
asked the princess, catching her breath.

"That was temper. I never gave it a thought; but some of the things you've said—"

"Made you angry?"

"No, hurt. I guess you were right

when you said on the ship that it would not be so hard to hurt me."

The princess was silent. Her breath was coming rapidly, but Dick did not notice it. They were standing at the foot of a flight of stone steps leading up to the ramparts, having strolled there unconsciously as they talked.

"Let's go up and get the view," said Dick.

Without answering the princess mounted the steps, crossed the broad wall, and seated herself on the ramparts. Dick stood in front of her, staring down into the misty valley.

"But I have treated you badly, too," he went on. "I've said mean things.

I'm sorry."

"Why did you do so?" asked the princess. "Because I taunted you?"

"Not altogether. I've been out of sorts. Do you want me to tell you why?"

"Yes," whispered the princess. "If

- if you are free to do so."

"I am. You have a right to know. I'm in your service and you have first claim on me. It was because of—Countess von Essingen."

The princess caught her breath. "I was in love with her once. She said she loved me, and then went and married another man—a beast. When she appeared on the scene the other day with her brother it—it upset me." He walked to the edge of the ramparts and stood for a moment looking out across the misty valley. Presently he turned. "It mixed me up. I didn't know. I had sort of an idea that I might be—still in love with her. But I'm not!"

After a little silence the princess said softly:

"Are you sure?"

"Positive."

"Beyond a doubt? Anybody could see that she is in love with you. And perhaps if you were to see her——"

Dick interrupted her with a gesture

of impatience.

"No, it's over; it's all finished; dead as an Egyptian mummy. I wasn't sure until to-day. Besides, she's not in love with me, as I understand it! I thought you had a right to know; and now that

I've told you let's not speak of it

again."

There was another long pause at the end of which the princess said in a voice which had a peculiar thrilling note:

"Thank you for telling me."

Suddenly she leaped up from the broad stone rampart and, turning, faced the valley. Her bosom was rising and falling rapidly and her face was turned

up toward the starlit sky.

"Isn't it lovely?" she cried in a low, rapturous voice. "Did you ever see anything sweeter than that great stretch of plain with the rolling hills and those jagged mountains against the purple sky? See how the mist hangs over the river-valley—and there is my star, that big, bright star! I call it mine, because I can see it through my window when I go to sleep." There was a lilt to her low-pitched voice like the note of a thrush at sunset.

From the wooded slope beneath them there came as if in answer the call of a

nightingale.

"A bulbul," said the princess. She laid her hand softly on Dick's arm.

"Listen, Osborne Pasha."

The bird finished its song. Another took it up, and soon a symphony of sweet, liquid notes arose from the velvety depths beneath.

The princess drew back and Dick, watching closely, saw her shudder.

"That is this country," she said. "One sees blood in the fountain and hears nightingales singing under the castle wall. Am I keeping you, Osborne Pasha?"

"You have not been, but I must go now. We are to have a council of

war.'

A musical voice floated up from the

depths of the garden:

"Princess Lilear! Princess Lilear!"
"Good night," said the princess softly. "That is Countess von Essingen. I
promised to walk with her in the garden. She wants to see the old towers
at night."

"Good night," said Dick.

"Good night! Coming, countess!" called the princess.

## CHAPTER V.

Since her final words to Hamdi Pasha, the Countess von Essingen had been wading in deep waters.

She was not a treacherous woman, nor was she cruel. She loved laughter and mischief and gaiety, tender words, music, flowers, delicate perfumes, or a swift ride 'cross country in the face of a brisk wind. She was very much alive, warm, sensuous, compassionate, and fierce, if need be. While without any particular ethical or moral code and unprincipled at heart as the woodnymph which she so much resembled in other ways, she had her full share of the fair-mindedness which is the particular heritage of American women.

Moreover, while she could be very fierce, she was at the same time warmhearted. Hamdi Pasha's insidious suggestion that she betray the Princess Lilear into his hands would only have aroused her ridicule and anger had it not been so adroitly offered. Edith had no conception of the Oriental ruthlessness of Ottoman character, nor did she appreciate what an utterly wild and uncivilized country she was in. She had seen a great deal of Hamdi, both in Paris, and on the Riviera. He was a friend of her brother's, and had once accompanied them on a motoring tour. She had thought of him only as a very attractive and finished man of the world, Orientally picturesque but at heart a European. In his own country he might have had a harem and made pretense of the faith of Islam, but this was vague in her mind. At present he was involved in a dangerous political conspiracy which would result in violence and bloodshed if the Princess Lilear remained in the country.

To Edith's mind the princess' cause was already lost, but because Osborne Pasha was in command and because the man was a born and trained fighter and as obstinate as an army mule, Karamania was to be drenched in blood, the princess sent into penniless exile, and the chances of Dick himself coming through alive were, in Edith's opinion, very slight. For the first time in her

life it seemed to her that duty and selfinterest walked side by side; and so she threw open her long French windows and stepped out into the soft, sweetsmelling night, with the stars sparkling overhead and the nightingales trilling under the castle wall, and hardened her heart to betray her gracious hostess to the Turk.

As she stood on the edge of the terrace listening, a murmur reached her from the ramparts; she recognized Dick's low-pitched tones, then the soft voice of the princess. The task before her became less difficult. It was then that she called and a moment later saw Dick's dark figure outlined against the sky, as he walked along the ramparts to enter Kostovo's room, which opened directly upon them. The princess came down the stone steps to meet her.

"How dark it is here under the trees!" exclaimed the princess. had better take a servant with a lan-

tern." "But that would spoil the whole ef-

fect."

"Perhaps you are right. We will do Besides, it is more thrilling without. and gruesome and creepy to go by ourselves in the dark, don't you think? How black it looks down there, and how far away!" She gave a nervous little laugh.

Edith peered into the black arcade under the low-branched olive-trees. She could feel her resolution ebbing fast.

"Perhaps you would rather not go." She looked hopefully at the princess. Edith's bravery was all for the daytime and belonged to the rush of emotions, warm blood and sunlight. She hated the dark.

"I'm not afraid," answered the princess. "Besides, there is a sentry at the postern-gate."

"Only one?"

The princess laughed.

"But is not one armed man enough -for ghosts?"

"There might be real things—savage

men."

Edith was losing her head in her fright. The princess glanced at her in surprise.

"There's no danger of that. The big gates are shut."

"But the little path?" "There's the sentry."

"He might be surprised and over-

"Not before he could give the alarm. Then all of the roads to Istria are watched."

Edith still hung back.

"What if there were enemies already in the town?" she began doubtfully. Her courage was coming back with the thought that Hamdi might have been unable to carry out his plan.

"That is not likely," said the princess, "but of course if you feel nervous-But how odd that you should be afraid; you were so brave when we were attacked." She was trying to see Edith's

face in the gloom.

"My-I'm not frightened now. I've always hated the dark. It's nothing. Let's go.

The princess turned toward a little

path under the castle wall,

"Then let us go this way; you can see the other side of the fortress as it

comes against the sky.

The entire circuit of the walls enclosed a space some three hundred yards in length and half as much in width, following the irregular outline of the flat top of a low hill. On three sides the slope was precipitous; the fourth, at a lower level, contained the entrance and was strongly fortified by twin towers and a dry moat. In the angle made by one of the towers and the wall there was a little gate from which a foot-path led down the side of the hill to the road beneath.

In front of the northwest tower the princess and her guest paused and looked doubtfully into the black, for-

bidding entrance.

"It is dark," said the princess.

Edith could not speak; some sixth sense had suddenly told her that enemies were lurking in the black recesses close at hand. The last vestige of her courage deserted her.

"Let us go back," she whispered. "You are really frightened?"

"I am. I am terrified."

"But there is nothing to be afraid of."

"But there is—there is!"
"I'll call the sentry."

"Don't—don't speak—don't make a sound! Let's run!" She grasped the princess' wrist in a grip which only terror could give.

Some quality in her fright struck a chill through the princess. Pride alone kept her from panic. She laughed un-

steadily.

"We are like two children afraid of the dark! We mustn't give way to it like this. There is no danger."

"We-don't-know---"

"Let's be brave. I will call the sentry."

"Sh'h'h'h!"
"Come then."

The princess looked furtively over her shoulder. The terrifying dark hemmed them in; it was like the shroud of some nightmare hiding awful things which were nameless.

"There's really nothing to fear," repeated the princess unsteadily. "Let us find the steps and go upon the ramparts. It is lighter"—she gave a frightened little laugh—"and we can walk back along the top to the palace."

But Edith knew that there was much to fear. They were standing directly in front of the black entrance to the tower and her starting eyes seemed held by some invisible power to the impalpable interior; then as she stared, her hyperacute hearing caught the faintest rustle from within. Her breath came in a shuddering gasp. Her knees swayed under her.

Twenty paces to their left the rugged outlines of the castle wall were sharply defined against the starlit sky; their substance was vague, deep, impenetrable, but against the somber mass there was visible an arched glimmer of

light.

"That is the postern-gate," said the princess, in Edith's ear, for neither seemed to be able to raise their voices above a whisper. "There is always a sentry stationed just outside. Let us go there and call to him to take us back."

"No! No! Let us—" Edith's voice failed and both hands flew to her heart. From the inky depths of the tower there had come a distinct metallic sound, followed by a rustle. The princess heard it, also.

"What was that?" she asked sharply, then forced a laugh. "Come, countess, we are on the verge of hysterics. Come with me to the gate and I will call the

sentry. That was only a rat."

She turned toward the postern. Edith moved unsteadily after her. There was another rustle from the tower. Glancing over her shoulder, she saw one dark figure, then another, a third, and yet a fourth glide silently from the doorway and be swallowed up in the toneless gloom of the wall. She covered her mouth with both hands to choke back the scream which seemed bursting from her chest. Her feet refused to move, and she swayed from side to side.

Suddenly the princess gripped her

wrist.

"Mon Dieu!" The girl's voice was choked, half strangled. "Mon Dieu! What is that thing? Look! Look!" The words came between her set teeth.

Edith, her senses reeling, looked down at the path. Almost at their feet, barely distinguishable from the gray stones, lay the stark body of a man. The pale glimmer from the postern struck upward with a dull, metallic sheen from his white face and the black pool in which he lay.

"Treason!" muttered the princess.
"It is the sentry!" She looked wildly

about her. "Come quickly!"

But the countess had sunk to the ground. The princess leaned over her, and as she stooped there was the quick shuffle of feet upon the pavement, a sudden rush of bulky shapes. The scream which burst from the princess' lips was stifled in the heavy *kaftan* thrown over her head, while her arms were pinned to her side with irresistible force. She felt herself swung bodily from the ground; the *kaftan* smothered her; and then, flying through infinite space, she passed gently into oblivion and knew no more.

The council of war had proceeded none too smoothly. Kostovo's demand in behalf of Osborne Pasha that he was to be invested with full command of the Karamanian army, crippled as it was from the loss of the ammunition, had been reluctantly agreed to, but on Dick's proceeding to outline his plan of campaign, he was met by immediate

'But that is not war, Osborne Pasha." exclaimed one of the generals, "to sit still, penned up here in our hills drilling our soldiers with empty guns for an indefinite number of weeks while Hamdi proclaims himself King of Karamania and launches against us his riffraff of fanatics and turns loose his Montenegrin hirelings to drive off our horses! That is not war.'

"No," said Dick, "it's diplomacy. Do you want to go to war with empty

guns?"

"But if we strike quickly and sharply!" cried Colonel Razamachi Bev.

"At what?" asked Dick. "If we strike at Suruk there is still Karoz, and if we strike at Karoz there is still Suruk, and if we strike at both Istria would be left unprotected."

"Not entirely, Osborne Pasha," said Kostovo. "We have a full regiment of

infantry.'

"You mean you have the men and you have the arms, such as they are, old muskets and the like. That is not a regiment; that is a mob. Your infantry have never performed a single evolution as a regiment. You have ten thousand more, for that matter, in the hills around Istria, but of what use are they as troops?"

"There are our five hundred Sepahis," ventured an elderly officer.

"Who are like the Akindschis," said Dick, "in being provided with scant ammunition for one good fight. No! There is only one thing to do. We must appear to disband our army and accept what terms Hamdi sees fit to impose with such grace as we can. If attacked by his Moslem rabble we will defend ourselves with our infantry, reserving the Akindschis for a more worthy foe."

"What?" cried Razamachi, springing to his feet, his face aflame and his eyes glittering. "You would let my Akindschis stand idle here in Istria while the infantry go out to meet this horde of Moslem dogs? That would be glorious! That would be splendid! How the women would laugh at us and call us the idle Akindschis!"

Dick turned slowly and fastened the

man with his cold gray eyes.

"And so, Colonel Razamachi," said he ironically, "for the sake of pleasing the women you would send out the corps which it has taken two years to perfect, to be wasted on a riffraff mob of scurvy dervishes, who would never get two miles into your hills if the road here were properly defended by the merest infantry recruits. Is that your idea of strategy?"

The hot-headed colonel seated him-

self.

"They will call us the idle Akindschis," he muttered. "They have already called us that for about a year."

Dick rose suddenly to his feet. "This is child's talk," said he. "Hamdi is prepared for war. We are not, owing to the loss of the ammunition. What we must now do is to wait. We must appear to disband, but continue to recruit and drill men back in the hills. The Akindschis themselves must be disbanded!"

Razamachi sprang to his feet and started to speak.

"Silence!" said Dick sternly. "Sit

Razamachi obeyed, muttering.

"In the meantime," said Dick, "we will send couriers to cable to Mallock and Company of New York for double the supply of the arms and ammunition which we have lost. Fortunately our financial condition is of the best. I am personally known to Mallock and can guarantee that within four weeks after sending my cipher there will be a ship at Podoni with our supplies. On learning of her arrival we will immediately muster in our full strength of cavalry, both Akindschis and Sepahis, make a quick march to Podoni, land the munitions under guard and have them here

in Istria before Hamdi knows that we have a soldier under arms. By that time we will also have recruited our army to the full resources of the country, which should make us an unpleasant object for interference by either of

our next-door neighbors.'

A dead silence followed his words; then one by one objections were offered. Hamdi's vigilance would make it impossible; Istria would be seized and held by his troops; it was probable that their persons would be apprehended. The princess would either be exiled or relegated to Hamdi's harem. Dick, listening quietly and without comment, learned a great deal which he wished to know and might not otherwise have discovered. But what struck him as of the greatest significance was the discovery that the Princess Lilear, as a determining factor in the uprising. was regarded by her chiefs as of far less consequence than her uncle had led him to believe, and that as the future sovereign, she was destined to be of much more importance to General Kostovo than to the kingdom of Karamania.

By two o'clock of the morning the council was talked out and had relapsed into a sulky silence. Nobody having anything further to offer, Dick rose to his feet. He looked about the hall with

a grim smile.

Then we are to take it as settled," said he, "that we must wait until we are better prepared, which should be within six weeks at the most. Hamdi will not attack Istria. He is not himself strong enough at present. would need artillery, and he knows it. For some weeks he will be quite content to let sleeping dogs lie.'

A sharp rapping at the door interrupted his speech. A young officer threw it wide. On the threshold stood a man dressed as a herder of horses. A bloody bandage encircled his head: one arm hung limp and he was covered from head to foot with the sandy dust

of the plains.

"One of my scouts!" cried Razamachi, springing to his feet. "Speak, Hassan!"

The man drew himself up and saluted with an effort. He was breathing rapidly, his face was of a greenish pallor, and it was evident that he had lost much blood.

"Excellencies, I am one of three scouts detailed to watch the road from Suruk. There are other scouts in the Plain of Plev, and to-night one of these came to us to report that an army of dervishes is marching on Istria. They are making much noise and the Mevlevee are whirling as they go. This army, which must number no less than five thousand persons, crossed the river Pley an hour before sunset."

"Mash Allah!" cried Kostovo. "Hamdi tries to force our hand. He means

"To give up our people to fire and sword!" cried Razamachi, springing to his feet. "What do you say now, Os-

borne Pasha?"

"Hamdi is a good general," said Dick. "He intends that we shall use up our scant ammunition on this pack of jackals and have only empty guns to turn against his own troops." He looked toward the scout. "Of what is this army composed?"

"For the most part of dervishes, effendi; there were some few mounted men and a number riding camels. But

I have still more to tell." "Speak!" said Kostovo.

"Half-way from the edge of the plain to Istria my comrades and I encountered a dozen mounted men. Even in the dark we recognized them as belonging to the Montenegrin Sepahis of Hamdi Pasha. With them there was an araba, and all were proceeding so swiftly that we had met before there was time to scale the bank."

His voice, which had been growing fainter, died away, while the greenish hue of his face became lighter in tint.

"Let him lie down," said Dick. "Support him, one of you; he's going to fall. He's badly hurt.'

A young captain sprang to the support of the scout, whose eyes were becoming vacant.

"My comrades-were cut-from the

saddle—" he began, when his grip upon the rim of the door suddenly relaxed and he fell limply forward into the arms of the captain.

At the same moment a gunshot rang out from the ramparts; it was followed by a quick, sharp cry and the sound of hurrying feet. The council sprang up to a man and surged toward the door. From the path in the garden below there came the sound of a man running rapidly.

"Who goes there?" challenged Kos-

The swift steps came to a halt; a voice panting heavily answered:

"The guard, Kostovo Pasha. The sentry at the northwest tower has been murdered. In the tower itself we found the American lady, bound hand and foot, with a cloth against her mouth."

"Where is the lady now?"

"Two of my comrades are carrying her to the palace."

"Is she injured?"

"I do not think so, effendi, but she is frightened almost to the point of death." Dick turned quickly to Kostovo.

"See if the princess is in the palace. I do not think that you will find her. She has been kidnaped by Hamdi. Colonel Razamachi!"

"Osborne Pasha!"

"How soon can you have your entire regiment of Akindschis ready to march?"

"In half an hour, excellency."

"Do so. It appears that you are to have it as you wish. Your Akindschis will strike the first blow for the freedom of Karamania, and," his voice was grim, "the chances are that it will be a hard one. Go!"

Razamachi saluted and hurried down the steps, his scabbard clanking on the stones behind him. Dick turned to Kostovo,

"General Kostovo, get your infantry under arms as quickly as possible. Send one battalion to defend the gorge which we decided upon as the strategic point on the road from Suruk. Keep the remainder with the Sepahis here, for the defense of Istria itself, as seems best

to you." He turned briskly to the of-ficers.

"Boots and saddles, gentlemen!"

Sunrise found the Akindschis, nearly a thousand strong, filing down through the hills toward the high plateau across which stretches the Plain of Plev. At the head of a deep ravine, where the trail from the hills comes out to meet the plain, the regiment was halted to await the return of a scouting party, sent out to reconnoiter the enemy.

In the bright fragrant morning, as Dick reviewed his force, he told himself that he had never seen a more effective looking corps. Small, lean, muscular men, with swarthy skins and keen gray eyes, they rode all with slack reins, snug knees, and the light-balanced seats of Arapahoes. Their magnificent horses were bred in the hills, selected for speed and endurance, surefooted as moufflon, high-tempered, eager, but trained like hunting-dogs. A tone of the voice, a light touch on neck or withers brought its quick response from these high-strung descendants of many generations of thoroughbreds, themselves ready to fight with tooth and heel when flung against an enemy.

The troopers were armed with short, modern magazine carbines, heavy revolvers, and yataghans, slightly different from the native Montenegrin weapon in being rather more of a cavalry saber and fitted with a hilt to protect the hand.

"If they lack anything," thought Dick to himself, "it is discipline."

A steady murmur arose from their ranks, with frequent bursts of stifled laughter, for the most un-Oriental feature of the Karamanian is a keen sense of humor and ready mirth. Absolute silence it seemed useless to attempt to impose, and as he thought of the day before them, Dick made no effort to do so. The active little men knew that there was some desperate fighting immediately ahead; this knowledge had been diffused in some impalpable way throughout their ranks; but as Dick reviewed them there was not an eye

which did not meet his with eagerness, not a face that did not wear a smile.

"There will be standing-room only in the bosom of the Prophet to-night," he thought, and despite the gravity of the situation, his lips twisted in a grim smile. The men of the forward files saw it and laughed outright; the intelligence was wafted back that the commander-in-chief was pleased with them.

They had not long to wait before the scouts, sent on ahead from Istria, rejoined the column, and the lieutenant

in command made his report.

"They number between four and five thousand," said he. "Among them are a few soldiers, but for the most part they are dervishes of all the different orders, with renegade brigands, kurd hamals, mollahs, imams, mu'azzins and other priests. There are also many Mohammedan farmers and herders from all the country roundabout. From a straggler captured, we learned that Hamdi Pasha has issued an iradé offering them Istria and all the villages of our hills for loot and pillage."

"Are there any cavalry?" asked

Dick.

"No genuine cavalry, excellency. Many of the people have taken horses from the herds along the road, but having no equipment and the horses appearing frightened at the tumult, these are less dangerous than their comrades afoot."

"How are they armed?"

"Some have firearms, some spears and yataghans, while many seem to be armed only with their long knives. There is no system among them. They are advancing like a herd of cattle."

"It is probable," said Dick to his staff, "that Hamdi is anxious to be rid of them and has simply thrown them out, as I have said, to exhaust our ammunition and to offer us delay. We will not linger over this rabble, as there is more important work ahead. Were there less of them we would pass them by without a blow, leaving them to the infantry. But they have come so far and are so many that they must be given a sharp check."

"Would it not be better to wipe them

out, leaving the path clean behind us?" asked Razamachi.

Dick swung on him sharply.

"Do you stop to kill jackals when you are wolf-hunting? How far is it from Istria to Suruk?"

"Forty kilometers, Osborne Pasha."

"And from Suruk to Karoz?"

"Forty-eight."

"Good! Four hours ago you were complaining of the idleness of your Akindschis. I have work for them today in both Suruk and Karoz, so we have little time and still less ammunition to waste on these pariahs ahead. We will strike them in échelon, cut our way through without drawing rein, reform on the other side, and continue on our way to Suruk, which we will attempt to surprise and capture. If Hamdi is there we will slay him if possible, then leaving a garrison, we will ride on to Karoz and attempt to seize that also. Does that prospect please you?"

Razamachi's beady eyes glittered.
"That is what the Akindschis are

for, Osborne Pasha."

"Then let us see how they will do it. Put your column in motion, colonel."

The sun was looking over the shoulder of the eastern hills as the Akindschis swung out into the plain. On the horizon ahead a thin cloud of dust eddied away to the southward in smoky swirls. The wind blows always, up or down the Plain of Plev, and rain falls but seldom through the summer months, and thus the position of the Moslem horde was plainly indicated.

So also should have been indicated to the "true believers" the column of Akindschis advancing rapidly over the plain. But the devotees of Islam, secure in their fanatical frenzy and the sense of numbers, took slight heed of the fan-shaped cloud of dust moving against the Kara Hills. It might be such a drove of horses as they had already passed, scampering across the plain; if they thought of it at all as a hostile force, it was with eager longing, for only two days before had a troop Karamanian horsemen dashed through the market-place at Suruk, scattering their pious assemblage, overturning their booths, ripping the sides from a tekkieh of the Mevlevee in the midst of their devotions, striking down arabajee and santon alike and generally "blackening their faces," to be gone again before they could realize that an enemy was among them.

Howling and whirling, screaming aloud the name of Allah, and at intervals even stopping to pray when some imam in authority mounted to the top of an araba to call the assan, they surged out across the plain and on toward the Giaour city in the hills, offered by the iradé of Hamdi Pasha to

the vengeance of Islam.

They were a wild and terrifying host. Hamdi Pasha himself, realizing with contempt the futility of any effort at military order or discipline, and more than weary of furnishing them with food, had flung them toward his enemy as one might fling a handful of filth.

As viewed by Mohammed, it was a pious army. There were dervishes of every breed, barring only the philo-There were muribs. sophical Vaisee. or novices, a goodly sprinkling of santons, or holy men who had apparently risen mushroomlike for the occasion, and whose office it was to lend their occult aid to strengthen the arms of the slayers. There were muscular, bow-backed Hamals from Kurdistan, hairy and wild, the slaughterers of the Armenians, the slaughterers of anybody

weaker than themselves.

Also there were renegade soldiers and brigand troops drawn by the lust of pillage and rapine, professing Islam but worshiping only carnage and loot. Some rode wild-eved horses from the backs of which they were often thrown. Others. swathed in cloths. mounted upon camels, stalking knockkneed and with supercilious heads among the throng. Many of a more practical turn of mind who had a little capital to invest in the "holy war," had brought with them arabas drawn by ponies or buffalo, and even push-carts in which to carry off Giaour loot or slaves.

And so they straggled across the

windy plain, in a Babel of noise and dust and multicolored fluttering rags, until suddenly a rise of the ground brought the leaders in sight of the vanguard of the Akindschis, sitting silent and watchful on a rise of the ground but half a mile away.

A frantic uproar burst from the Moslem horde, while its actions suggested a flock of sheep suddenly confronted by the wolf-pack. The stragglers began to run in from the edges and crowd themselves into the mass, the whole of which grew solid and compact, apparently dwindling in size. Where at first it might have been likened to a swarm of bees in flight, it became like the same swarm clustered upon the branch.

For several minutes Dick studied the enemy attentively through his glasses. The troopers had dismounted and were tightening girths and looking to their weapons and stirrup-leathers. Presently the bugle sounded "mount" and all were in the saddle again.

Dick called Razamachi aside.

"It would not be good tactics for us to charge them when they are massed like that," said he. "We must open them out. They do not know the size of our column so perhaps we can tempt them to attack. Dismount these first two troops which they have seen, detail men to hold the horses, and send the troopers in two lines of skirmishers advancing to the attack on foot, one line on the right wing and another on the left. At a range of five hundred meters have them lie down and open fire with their carbines. Let there be an interval of at least five hundred meters between these two skirmish parties. Do you understand?"

"Perfectly, Osborne Pasha."

"Good. These fanatics will be sure to make a rush, which will not only scatter them but split their center. Then, when I give the word, have the bugler sound the charge and our mounted troops will sweep through the dervishes in a flying wedge, destroying as many as they can but not drawing rein; do you understand? Not drawing rein. Is that clear?"

"Perfectly, Osborne Pasha."

"Good. The dismounted troops will not have reached their horses until after we have charged. They are to mount and ride in a détour on either side of the dervishes without engaging." Dick's voice rang out harshly. "Make that clear to the captains-that they are not under any circumstances to engage."

Razamachi's face became a mass of

wrinkles.

"But why?" he began.

Dick swung on him savagely.

"Because those are the orders, Colonel Razamachi Bey; that is why! Now carry them out as quickly as you can."

Razamachi scowled, but saluted and wheeled his horse sharply. Calling the two captains aside, he transmitted the orders, which, as Dick could see with the tail of his eye, were received first with a few sharp words of protest and then in moody silence. But no time was lost.

A moment later the two troops which had been upon the crest of the rise and were alone visible to the dervishes, turned in opposite directions and trotted sharply out upon the plain until some distance beyond the right and left wings of the dervish array, when they halted. The troopers dismounted quickly, took their intervals, and in line of skirmishers advanced at a double-quick toward the enemy. Dick, watching them closely, felt his soul cheered at the smartness of the maneuver.

The dervishes were still huddled in dense confusion. It was apparent that they expected an infantry charge; their frenzied cries grew wilder. The frantic yells of "Allah akbar! Allah akbar!" rose in a swelling diapason. Those in the front ranks leaped up and down bawling defiance and howling impreca-The Giaours of the hills, instead of being stricken, were moving

forward to strike!

Good! It would make their conquest easier than if they were to be hunted from their lairs. Even before the skirmishers had ceased to advance the impatient fanatics began to break away from the edges of their formation and fling forward to meet them.

For a moment Dick was afraid that their frenzy was going to spoil the military precision of his maneuver, and that to save the two dismounted troops he would be obliged to give the signal to charge before a shot had been fired.

Then suddenly the little brown troopers on the plain sank to the earth as one man, even while the foremost of the fanatics were leaping toward them, and the whole mass showed signs of division and disintegration. A clear. loud call went ringing down the wind; instantly the skirmish-lines began to spout fine white jets of smoke, and a moment later the crackling reports reached the ears of their companions.

Some of the leaping figures were seen to pitch forward upon their faces; others sank to the ground screaming, while still others fell back upon their fellows in the rear. But as a whole, the horde still surged forward, its center growing thinner and thinner until suddenly, like some cohesive mass which is stretched beyond its limits it parted entirely, while the two bodies, now distinct, lost in an instant their density as they opened up to swallow the infidel.

The moment was ripe. Dick turned

to his bugler.

"Sound the charge!"

The wild note rang out, its swelling cadence lost in the roar of hoofs as the Akindschis leaped forward to the charge. They were none too soon. Dervishes were falling within twenty paces of the skirmish-line before their comrades had swept past them and poured like a devastating flood into the open ranks of their assailants.

The Akindschis, at Razamachi's order, had drawn revolvers and these they used to the exclusion of their yataghans while in the thick of the fight. For a moment the charge, though well planned and well executed, became a whirling maelstrom of furious hand-tohand fighting, the powder from the Akindschis' weapons flaming the very beards of their crazed antagonists.

Dervishes upon their feet looked into the muzzles of the pistols and struck without flinching, though their souls. went to Allah with the blow. Dervishes, bowled over, lay upon their backs to strike with their yataghans at the flying legs of the horses which trod them.

Dick himself had fought fiercely but automatically, emptying both revolvers, with scarcely a consciousness of how or at whom, in his passionate eagerness to see that his regiment pressed on through, keeping its formation intact and never checking its headlong advance.

And this the Akindschis did, and splendidly. Furious as the fighting seemed and long, the time that it takes a man to run a thousand yards found them out again in the open plain, their formation still intact, sweeping on away from their enemy.

Well clear of the fight, they halted. Here and there a saddle was empty, or a man was ministering to his own or his comrade's wounds. Forming quickly in separate troops, they reloaded and looked back at the havoc left in their

The fanatic army was torn into ribbons. The charge of the Akindschis had flung back the swarm which had been rushing forward to destroy the skirmishers, who had reached their horses, mounted, and were even then riding forward to rejoin their column.

As the charge had swept through and past the rabble, bands of dervishes had broken away from the main body and pursued the troopers, howling like dogs. Some of these the Karamanians had turned upon and killed; others had followed them all of the way to where they had halted. Several were shot down like rabid animals, directly at the troopers' feet.

But although the Moslems had suffered frightful loss and had inflicted but little in return, the mutilation received appeared only to have whetted their appetite for battle; and as the two companies deployed as skirmishers rode forward together, they sprang to receive

On they came at a gallop while Dick watched them in perplexity. Their orders had been not to join forces but to ride around on either side of the dervishes and rejoin the column without engaging. Instead of this, they had come together and appeared to be heading straight for the divided center of the enemy.

"Do they mean to disobey orders?" cried Dick angrily to Razamachi.

The colonel shrugged.

"They are Karamanians!" said he oracularly.

"Sound the assembly!"

The bugle sang out melodiously; as it did so the troopers far on the opposite side of the field were seen to lean forward, drawing their revolvers. At the same time the mass closed in upon them from either side. The bright sun sparkled on thousands of flashing points, and the gusty wind brought down the clamor of shots and savage cries. The two troops had deliberately, and in direct disobedience of orders, engaged the enemy.

Dick watched them in stony silence. Far in the distance the brown Kara Hills rose gaunt and rugged, but bathed in splendid shadows of saffron and purple, their harsh outlines against a sky of silvery blue. From their slopes the plains rolled forward in long undulations like great ocean swells, but the foreground was claimed by the tossing, glittering, multicolored army of blood-thirsty religionists of a dying faith locked in the death-grapple with a mortal enemy.

Dick, watching with fury, cursed in his heart the wild lawless spirit of the hills which made of his otherwise magnificent command upon which everything now depended, a mutinous, undisciplined mob.

Yet he knew that if he could hold their comrades all might yet be well. Not one man of the whole regiment should stir by his order, no matter if the furiously fighting troops were massacred before their very eyes. And that was what appeared to be destined.

The two refractory troops had apparently determined to pass through the divided Moslems by the same path as their companions, and at the first glance this appeared to be easy of accomplish-

ment with little or no loss to themselves, for the regiment had flung back the two separated masses as a snowplow clears a road, leaving drifted car-

nage in its trail.

But the frenzied fanatics had poured in behind; the gap was rapidly filling, and half-way through the two troops found themselves hemmed in by hun-

dreds.

Even then they might easily have cut their way out upon the other side had they kept this maneuver in mind, but wild, tempestuous hill-folk that they were and maddened by the fury of the Moslems, they made no effort at anything beyond the destruction of the

enemy.

Twice they had fought their way to the very edge of the mass and then had turned and fought their way back into it again. Their revolvers were long since emptied and they were fighting with their yataghans, hacking, hewing, stabbing with incredible fury. Before long the results of the fight became easily evident. The dervishes were thinning fast, but at the same time the ebullitions, stirring here and there throughout the whole rotating mass, were becoming smaller and less.

But Dick was watching the fight with far less anxiety than that with which he scanned his regiment. Behind him the other troops were straining forward like hounds in the leash, clamoring openly to be led to the rescue of their comrades. Every other minute one of the captains would dash up to Razamachi to protest passionately at being obliged to sit and watch the massacre of two entire troops. To these officers, the colonel gave short, sullen answers, at the same time turning his beady eyes malevolently toward Dick.

When at length the murmurs from the regiment had grown into an uproar, Razamachi himself could stand it

no longer.

"Are we to stand here like stone images, Osborne Pasha," he cried, "while our comrades"—he pointed with his saber toward the fight—"are ripped in pieces by this pack of pariah dogs?"

Dick turned upon him furiously.

"Are you cowards?" he cried harshly, that all near him might hear. "Are you afraid of the work ahead? Do you want to go on, or do you want to finish the day with these jackals and then ride back to Istria with nothing done? Are not two troops of Akindschis enough to destroy these vermin? Must it take the whole regiment?"

"We wish to save our brothers!"

cried a voice from the ranks.

"Silence!" roared Dick. A look of fierce contempt showed itself on his rigid face. "Perhaps you had rather fight half-naked priests now than Ham-

di's Sepahis an hour later!"

The taunt had its full effect, although it brought an angry snarl from the ranks. Dick wheeled his horse and riding slowly down the column, lashed each successive troop with the same bitter, sneering words; words which at any other time could not have been ut-

tered to a single man.

Utterly disregarding the fight, he threw his whole force and energy into holding the regiment in check, and in this he won the day. For suddenly a shout burst from the tensely watching troopers, then a roar, and looking toward the plain, Dick saw the last ragged fragment of the Moslem army fly suddenly to pieces. Right from its hollow core it broke, like a jug dropped on a pavement, and a moment later the fanatics were in flight, here, there, scattering in every direction over the plain.

After them, like terriers after rats, went the few half-mad survivors of the Akindschis, slashing and stabbing, cutting down all within the reach of their keen-edged yataghans. At length, spent and exhausted, they came limping

back to the column.

Of those who had ridden into the fight, some hundred and ten in all, there were left perhaps a score, not

a man of whom was whole.

A captain, the only surviving officer, rode straight to Dick and saluted with his dripping blade.

"You gave us great support, Osborne Pasha!" he cried, with savage irony. "I will give you a court martial be-

fore you are many days older," answered Dick harshly. "You mutinous dog, was it because you thought we would haul you out by the nape of the neck that you disobeyed your orders!"

The captain stared. His mouth quiv-

"To obey our orders would have disgraced us!" he cried.

"You fool!" exclaimed Dick fiercely. "Do you call yourself a soldier? You have thrown away the finest men on a worthless enemy. You are finished before we start. Now, your orders are to remain here and look after the wounded, while those of us who understand discipline will go ahead with the real work of this war."

The officer stared at him, dazed and stunned. He dropped his blood-stained face into his hands and burst into tears. Dick turned his back upon him and addressed Razamachi.

"The regiment has lost two hundred men!" he snapped. "It should not have needed fifty. Instruct the men, whose horses have been killed or are not fit to go on, to remain here as a guard for the wounded and to convey them back to Istria as best they can. This will reduce our force to about seven hundred men, but there is no help for it. We have no time to lose."

Razamachi saluted in silence and gave the necessary orders. Out across the Plain of Plev tattered fragments of the dervish army were slinking off in all directions, with many a furtive backward glance. To the southward a heavy cloud of dust was streaking off in wind-blown ribbons; and as Dick watched it idly, wondering as to its cause, a second and smaller cloud arose above the slightly higher ground a point to the eastward of the first.

His suspicion was aroused. Fixing the dust-clouds with his glass he discovered them to be moving slowly toward the east, then as he continued to watch them, he suddenly observed two small, black objects, which a moment later proved to be horsemen coming rapidly in his direction. When near at hand he saw that they were the Akindschis' scouts, sent out to reconnoiter Suruk.

As they drew rein one of the horses staggered and fell; its mate stood tottering, legs apart, sides bulging, and eyes glazed. The splendid animals had traveled from Istria to Suruk, thence a third of the way on the road to Karoz, and back to the scene of the battle, since the departure of the column from Istria.

"What have you learned?" asked Dick sharply. "Speak!"

"Suruk has been evacuated, excellency. Hamdi Pasha is concentrating at Karoz. The Montenegrin Sepahis, to the number of five hundred, rode out from the town an hour ago. That is their dust." He pointed to the southeast

"And the other dust?"

"That is from the Turkish garrison infantry column, now in Hamdi's pay. They also number in the neighborhood of five hundred men."

"Have you learned anything of the Princess Lilear?"

"It appears that she was not taken to Suruk at all, excellency, but directly to Karoz by Hamdi Pasha himself. Half of his personal escort accompanied him, while the other half returned to Suruk with an empty araba and orders for the garrison to evacuate and march at once to Karoz."

"From whom did you learn this?"
"From a eunuch at Hamdi's palace.
Suruk is like a city of the dead., All
have gone but a few servants who are
looting the palace."

"You have done well." Dick turned to his orderly. "My compliments to Colonel Razamachi and I wish to speak with him."

A moment later Razamachi rode up. Dick pointed to the two dust-clouds advancing slowly across the horizon.

"There are five hundred Sepahis and five hundred Turkish infantry," said he. "They are proceeding to Karoz. If they get there Karamania is lost to us. Is the column ready to move?"

## CHAPTER VI.

The Akindschis were traveling fast. The Karamanian horses possess a smooth, gliding single-foot gait which devours the miles swiftly with little

wear on horse or rider.

Far across the Plain of Plev the movement of the dust-clouds showed that the Sepahis had overhauled and passed the infantry. A little later the dust of the Sepahis disappeared as they left the plain and entered the hills. Razamachi calculated that the column would overtake the infantry in a broad valley, where the trail from Suruk to Karoz wound between gentle slopes before entering a deep gorge cut by the river Plev.

In this he proved to be correct. An hour later, as they entered the valley, the infantry column was discovered half a mile ahead. The Akindschis had been sighted, and the Turks were formed in a hollow square to receive them. Beyond, the walls of the valley came together to form a narrow ravine where a bend hid the Sepahis from

sight.

The Akindschis halted, and Dick passed them in rapid review. As he observed their splendid condition, his spirits rose. Here and there a horse or rider was marked by some minor wound, but the regiment as a whole was in excellent form. It had traveled thirty miles since dawn and fought a sharp little fight but, if one ignored the scars of battle, horses and riders might have been fresh from stables.

As Dick rode down the line, the swarthy, bright-eyed little troopers shot looks of keenest expectancy at the commander-in-chief, against whom but an hour ago they had all but risen in open mutiny, but whose methods they had been sharply taught to respect. The lesson of Squadron A, cut to pieces by the dervishes and its survivors left to nurse their wounded, had done everything for the discipline of Razamachi's Akindschis.

On ascertaining the position of the enemy, Dick immediately formed his plan of attack. The whole force, which numbered about seven hundred men, was to be split into two squadrons. The first, under Razamachi, was to be dismounted and attack the infantry on foot. The second, under Dick himself,

was to overtake the Sepahis and hang on their heels, keeping them under carbine fire, but not attempting to actually engage until Razamachi should come

"But why waste our time with this infantry?" grumbled the impetuous colonel. "It is nothing but the old Turkish garrison, gone over to Hamdi. They do not want to fight, and will

surrender at the first volley.'

"That is why I am leaving you a full squadron," said Dick. "If you were fewer they would probably fight, and if I spared you any more the Sepahis ahead would turn and devour us. As it is, I shall try to hold them in check without closing with them until you come up. But if this is impossible and the worst comes to the worst, my three hundred and fifty Akindschis will have to do their best. Our men are better mounted and use their firearms, whereas the Montenegrins prefer to fight with the yataghan. Furthermore, the Karamanians are fighting for their homes while the Montenegrins are fighting for so many piastres a day."

Five minutes' halt to tighten girths and examine weapons and the second squadron was again in motion. It held straight on down the valley, passing the infantry without the exchange of a single shot, and before the astonished Turks could realize its purpose had passed out of range and was rapidly disappearing in the distance. Almost at the same instant 'Razamachi's squadron appeared, dismounted, and was moving to the attack in line of

skirmishers.

As Dick's squadron swept around the bend at the far end of the valley they came in sight of the Montenegrin Sepahis less than a mile ahead proceeding slowly down the gorge. Almost immediately they were discovered, when the Sepahis executed a maneuver which strung them across the narrow valley from side to side and facing their enemy. It was apparent that they were suspicious of an effort on the part of the better-mounted Akindschis to make a dash through or past them and reach Karoz in advance.

Within good carbine range of the enemy Dick brought his squadron to a halt, and for the moment the two hostile forces sat in silence eying each other vigilantly. Dick's interests lay all in delaying the assault for as long as the Sepahis could be held in check. For their part, the Montenegrins themselves had twice felt the fierce, lashing onslaught of the small, dark, active troopers sitting their well-trained horses with light, clinging seats and carbines on their thighs; they had not had time to estimate their relative numbers, and so for the moment the Sepahis were in no haste to precipitate a battle.

Then, as they waited in watchful tension, there came suddenly from up the gorge the reverberating echoes of a volley, followed almost immediately by the rattling reports of firing on the

skirmish-line.

The Sepahis hesitated to attack, Dick was thankful of the respite, for his squadron had traveled fast and it gave an opportunity to breathe his horses.

He scanned the ground critically, and a furrow drew itself between his eyes as he noted how unfavorable it was for the Akindschis. The ravine was less than two hundred yards in width before mounting in steep, boulder-strewn slopes. Between these the floor of the gorge was fairly smooth, composed of sand and loose stones, but with here and there a huge boulder, which would have made any general evolution quite impossible, even had space permitted of it.

It was very obvious that if the clash came here the two hostile forces would block the entire place and the fighting would be hand to hand, thigh to thigh, and jaw to jaw. This would give an advantage to the Sepahis, who were larger and heavier men than the Karamanians, and liked best to fight in ex-

actly this way.

Had Dick commanded trained and disciplined cavalry he would have fired a volley, then wheeled and retreated up the valley to the open ground; as it was, he distrusted the ability of his Akindschis to conduct an orderly retreat. Such a maneuver requires, perhaps more than any other, veteran troops and a cold-blooded discipline which was not to be expected among

the hot-blooded little hillmen.

But even as he deliberated he saw that the Sepahis were getting restive. The Montenegrins are fighting-men; their hands were on the hilts of their yataghans, an enemy, obviously inferior in numbers, was in front of them, and their suspicions were aroused at this hesitation on the part of foemen who had heretofore been ready enough to strike.

In that moment Dick realized that the pivotal point of the Karamanian struggle for liberty had been reached. Hamdi Pasha's holy war had failed; its miserable dupes were scattered dead, dying and fugitive across the Plain of Plev. The defeat of the Turkish infantry by Razamachi's squadron was a thing assured. Could he now but fall upon and destroy the mercenaries in front of him Karoz would be at his

mercy.

And the Princess Lilear, his princess, to the service of whom he was sworn, was at that moment a prisoner in Karoz, in the power of the Turk. There came to him the swift vision of a pale, passionate face with long, clear eves half veiled by the double row of black lashes, a quivering upper lipand suddenly his heart sent the blood tingling through his limbs, and his grip on the reins tightened.

Opposite him the Sepahis were stirring uneasily, and Dick saw at a glance that he was not going to be able to carry out his maneuver as he had planned. The enemy was forming for

a massed attack.

"It will not do to let them charge," he said quickly to his major. "We will have to charge ourselves, but first give

them a volley.

The Sepahis were drawing in their wings. The irregularity of the ground made any sustained formation impossible, but it was obvious that when the clash came the advantage would be with the body which was moving ahead cohesively and with greater force. Dick had hoped for time at least to throw the enemy into momentary confusion by a volley, then to charge before it had recovered. But even as he looked, he saw that the opportunity was overripe; that if he were to strike at all he must strike on the instant.

"Draw revolvers!" he said sharply

to his major.

The officer swung in his saddle and shouted the order. The squadron was hanging tense and poised, the troopers eager and expectant, straining forward like cheetahs on the leash. A fierce, sibilant mutter ran through the ranks, a shrill-noted growl, as the lean, brown hands snatched the revolvers from their holsters.

At the same instant Dick's eye was caught by a sudden movement in the ranks of the enemy. He rose high in his stirrups and waved his revolver over

his head.

"Akindschis, charge!" he bellowed.

Before the words were out of his mouth the walls of the ravine were thundering back the echoes of the horses' hoofs and the savage cries of the Karamanian riders.

But the Sepahis had not waited for the attack. As the Akindschis swept forward, they sprang to meet them, and the two compact and swiftly moving bodies came together with terrific vio-

lence.

At the first crushing contact many horses and riders were overthrown; a moment later and the jam was so close that a horse could not have fallen except by dropping straight in its tracks and a trooper could move only as the surging of the press carried him.

Dick, charging at the head of his column, found himself wedged into a crevice in the ranks of the enemy. Neither side had fired a shot during the charge; the Sepahis had flung aside their carbines and drawn their yataghans, but the Akindschis struck their enemy, revolvers in hand; and jammed together as they were, their fire had, for the first few minutes, been terribly effective.

Dick himself had quickly cleared a place about him when for several moments their very pressure kept him beyond the sweep of the weapons of the enemy which hemmed him in. Firing quickly and carefully he wasted but few shots; around about him the firing was growing less and less as the Akindschis, having emptied their revolvers, thrust them back in their holsters and

drew their sabers.

The men of the forward ranks were fighting furiously, knee to knee, but there were many in the rear of both forces who had not fired a shot or struck a blow; some of these, gripped tight in the jam, were unable to move and sat their ponies, howling like dogs; some, almost at the front, hauled themselves from the saddle and swarmed across the backs of their comrades' horses to get within striking distance of the enemy, while others on the outer edges broke off and climbed like cats around the steep, boulder-covered sides of the gorge to strike their enemy upon the flank. A few of the cooler-headed Akindschis had slipped from their horses, carbine in hand, and sprawling over the rocks on either side, were inflicting heavy damage on the enemy.

Suddenly Dick found himself, saber in hand, packed in the midst of his own men. The Akindschis had gained ground on one side, falling back on the other, and this had given a rotary motion to the whole mass, which suddenly reversed the order of the combatants, bringing those in the rear forward. On every side of him were riderless horses and raving troopers, who had survived the first shock of con-

tact.

For an instant it looked as if the Sepahis had been wiped away; then a sweeping eddy of the fight brought straight through their midst a solid column of hacking, hewing Montenegrins, cutting their way through like reapers in a field of grain, and every man was locked with an enemy again.

locked with an enemy again.

Then Dick found himself wedged among his own men and many riderless horses, with no enemy in reach of his blade. All about the Akindschis were clamoring one to the other to make room. Not twenty feet away was a furious vortex of fighting; troopers on either side were slipping to the ground

to reach an enemy, then leaping to the saddle again. A number were fighting on foot. Many a Sepahi horse was car-

rying an Akindschi rider.

Dick's reason, blinded for the moment by the stress of battle, returned to him in the brief respite; he realized that not a shot was being fired. It was steel, nothing but steel, and so the combat marched but slowly. He snatched his revolver from the holster, flung out the shells and began to cram fresh cartridges into the greasy chambers.

"Load revolvers! Load! Load revolvers!" he bawled to the screaming

men around him.

No heed was paid and he gripped the shoulder of a trooper jammed against his side. The man spun in his saddle, the saber quivering in his hand.

"Load! Load!" shouted Dick. "Use

your revolvers!"

The trooper stared; quick intelligence swept away the frenzy. He shouted to his mates. The word passed swiftly. A moment later the revolvers of the stalled Akindschis began to bark again, and almost as they did so another upheaval of the fight flung the enemy into

their midst.

A following phase of this battle-life, which seemed to him interminably long, found Dick the object of attack by several enemies. With his weapons freshly charged, he quickly fought his way through them, when fresh ones surged up as if rising from the earth. Something had come to obscure his vision and twice this had narrowly cost him his life. The revolvers were empty again, and with no time to reload he drew his saber.

A moment later his horse was down, struck by an Akindschi's bullet, and directly afterward he found himself clinging to the stirrup of a Sepahi's horsestruggling to mount, while the rider, whom he had just sabered, was writhing on the ground and stabbing at his

legs.

As he rode back into the fight, wiping his eyes with his sleeve, he saw that the press was lighter and the struggle less furious. Men's blows were struck more slowly and with whistling

breaths. Here and there horses were standing with legs apart, propped as it were to keep from falling, heads down, ribs working like bellows. The sand was carpeted with men and animals. The cries and shouts had ceased, even while the crash of blows continued.

Then suddenly the carbines began to crack again; the reek of powder filled the air as the wounded Akindschis began to shoot. Jets of smoke spouted from forms prostrate upon the sand.

Dick looked about bewildered, and to his amazement found that he was entirely alone, in the very middle of the valley, his pony with head hanging low picking its way between the bodies of the slain. Presently the beast came to a stop, and Dick began to reload his revolver, finding the chambers with difficulty.

As he was doing this he saw that the battle had broken into individual fights, involving a score or two score of men, and these were going on here and there, quite apart and in different locations.

He was about to fling himself into the nearest when a Sepahi bore down upon him with his yataghan swinging above his head and his horse laboring heavily through the deep sand. Straight at him he came, without drawing rein, and as Dick swerved and fired the other struck.

The blow fell wide, striking Dick's pony across the neck, shearing through the spine and deep into the muscles. The animal dropped straight in its tracks, and rolled, half burying Dick in the sand. Instinctively he struggled clear, but a sudden nausea overcame him and for several minutes he lay utterly inert.

When he looked about again, dazed and spent, the knots of fighting men appeared to have dissolved. Here and there were clusters of exhausted troopers, some sitting, others prone and indistinguishable from the slain. A short distance from him a Sepahi was standing on his feet, clinging to the mane of a wounded pony, while two Akindschis sprawling on the ground near-by regarded him listlessly. Presently one of them raised his carbine, fired, and the Sepahi fell without a struggle.

Wounded men on every side were crying for water, but none was to be had in that dry place of sand and stones. A squad of troopers, laughing uproariously and swaying in their saddles, came riding up from the lower end of the gorge, and Dick gathered from the jokes which were passing between them that they were returning from the pursuit and slaughter of fugitive Sepahis.

One of the men spied him and rode to where he was sitting on the sand, his back against the rump of his dead

"That was a good fight, excellency!" cried the man.

"Yes," said Dick wearily, "it was a

good fight."

"It will be a lesson to these 'blackfaces'! Karamania chock yasha!"

"Karamania chock yasha!" (Long live Karamania!)

The man dismounted.

"Is your excellency badly wounded?" he asked.

"No," said Dick slowly. "I am resting."

The trooper laughed again.

"One has need to rest. But there is not a spot on your excellency the size of a medjideah that is not bloody."

Dick raised his eyes to the man with

a slow smile.

"You are not much better," he answered. "That was a hard fight."

"A bath would do me no harm; and a drink of water less. Your excellency would not guess it, but I am one of your captains. We were side by side for several minutes and twice I saved your excellency's life, and twice you did the same for me."

"You Akindschis," said Dick, "are good fighters. Your courage is better than your discipline. Give me a hand to my feet. I have lost some blood."

The captain helped him up, and in a moment his head grew clear again.

"Get me a good horse," he said. "My own is sound, Osborne Pasha; you will find no better."

"Good!"

Dick mounted laboriously, and sat for a minute reviewing the field. Fearful as the carnage had been, he regarded it with no emotion, his faculties being, for the moment, numbed. Here and there some survivor was ministering to a wounded comrade, but for the most a stillness of sound and motion lay on the place.

But the Akindschis! "The idle Akindschis!" Looking about the field, Dick slowly realized that of his entire squadron not fifty men remained, and of these it was doubtful if a single man

was unhurt.

His own head and limbs and body were covered with countless minor wounds, none of which was disabling. He was roughly dressing these when a bugle sang out from the head of the valley and here came the second squadron in column of fours, the troopers crying out with horror and amazement as the carnage met their eyes.

At their head rode Razamachi, one arm in a sling and a bloody bandage above his knee. Halting the column,

he hastened to join Dick.

"Mash Allah! But you have been busy, Osborne Pasha. And your squadron?

Dick jerked his head toward the battle-field.

"It is there."

"But the survivors? They are in

pursuit of the enemy?"

"No; the enemy are here also. There are some fifty and odd Akindschis resting in the shade of those rocks. And what have you to report?"

Razamachi's staring eyes were traveling slowly across the field; he was making in his throat the peculiar clicking sound, expressive of amazement. Dick's final words he recovered his self-possession.

"The infantry have surrendered and are under guard, Osborne Pasha.'

And your losses?" "Good!

"Forty killed and wounded," he answered.

"You have done very well, Colonel We will leave the sur-Razamachi. vivors of my squadron to rest and assist their comrades. Have the prisoners carry the wounded to the nearest village. Select all of the sound men from your squadron and we will proceed at once to the next village upon the route to Karoz, where we will halt for an hour for food and rest."

"And afterward?"

"Afterward we will ride on to Karoz, which we will attempt to surprise and carry by assault."

Razamachi looked doubtful.

"That is asking a great deal of our men and horses, Osborne Pasha."
"Will Dick. "Will

"Sapristi!" snarled Dick. "Will nothing satisfy you, man? Only last night you were growling like a cross camel because you feared the women might call your regiment the 'idle Akindschis'!"

A scant three hundred strong, who that morning had mustered a thousand, the Akindschis rode slowly down the ravine, filed through the pass, and came out beyond upon the sweeping Plain of Karoz, which is divided by a spur of the Kara Hills from the Plain of Plev.

Here in a village they came upon some half-dozen fugitive Sepahis, and these, according to the primitive and thorough rules of Oriental warfare, they promptly shot down in their tracks. Learning from the villagers, true Karamanians, that a few other stragglers of the Sepahis regiment had passed through on the road to Karoz, twenty fresh horses were procured, and mounting picked men upon these, they were put under command of a captain with instructions to ride rapidly to the very walls of Karoz, overtaking the fugitives ahead, whom they were to kill or capture. The rest of the squadron halted for an hour for food and repose.

The sun was sinking behind the Kara Hills when they rode out again and turned their horses' heads toward Karoz, fifteen miles away. Before they had traveled far they came upon two dead Sepahis lying by the roadside. Farther on there was a third, and still farther they passed three more. It was apparent that the scouts were executing their mission successfully.

Before long the darkness came, and soon afterward they mounted some rising ground and saw the lights of Karoz glittering brightly not more than five miles distant. Half an hour's brisk riding brought them within sight of the grim walls of the old Frankish castle looming darkly against the starlit sky. Almost to the town they came upon the

scouts, returning to report.

"Karoz lies open to your hand, excellency," said the captain in command. "It was expected that we might come by the direct road from Istria, and the Turkish garrison which was here, about three hundred men, has been sent to hold the pass between the hills just before the road comes out upon the plain. There is left scarcely a corporal's guard in the fortress; and Hamdi Pasha himself is giving a banquet in his palace, the lights of which you see on the hill to your right. A rumor has come, I do not know how, but apparently brought by some flatterer anxious to please, that we Akindschis were cut to pieces in destroying the dervish army on the Plain of Plev." He laughed and his comrades joined him.

"How did you learn all of this?"

asked Dick.

The young man hesitated slightly, then answered with apparent embarrassment.

"From a woman of my acquaintance, excellency, whose brother is a merchant of horses and knows all of the gossip of the bazaars."

"Good," said Dick. "Then you think that we can seize the fortress without

difficulty?"

"Without the striking of a blow. I have taken two Sepahis prisoners. When we are challenged one of these will answer 'Hamdi Pasha's Sepahis,' and we will ride in unquestioned, for the Montenegrins are expected even now."

Dick tugged at his mustache. Pres-

ently he turned to Razamachi.

"The plan is a good one," said he. "Do you, Colonel Razamachi, proceed to carry it out, seizing the fortress and immediately organizing a castle-guard and a detail to patrol the town. The infantry sent to block the road from Istria will of course surrender as soon as they learn the state of affairs."

"And you, Osborne Pasha?"

"You may give me twenty-five men under a lieutenant. Although not invited, I believe that I will assist at the banquet given to-night by Hamdi Pasha!"

Secure in the knowledge brought by his scouts that Razamachi's Akindschis had ridden out from Istria at daylight, apparently to give battle to the army of dervishes, and further fortified in the tidings brought by a mollah that although they had cut this army into ribbons, the Akindschis themselves had been decimated in so doing, Hamdi Pasha felt that he had succeeded almost beyond his expectations if not in excess of his just deserts.

"It is hardly fair," thought the Ottoman, with a lurking smile. "These simple hill-folk—such children! But really, I had expected better things of

Osborne Pasha."

He reviewed rapidly in his mind the success attending his every move. The burning of the custom-house with Kostovo's supplies, the fomentation of the djehad, his abduction of the princess, the ruse by which he had led the Karamanians to believe that she had been taken to Suruk, and his timely launching of the dervish army to check the pursuit—all was most gratifying. The only feature to mar the whole was the unfortunate accident to his friend at the hands of his Montenegrins; but this he told himself, with perfect truth, was the result of circumstances which no living man could possibly have foreseen.

As matters stood, he did not see how his position could be stronger. Suruk, to be sure, had been evacuated, but Suruk was a place of little value and no strategic importance. Even now, his Sepahis must be entering Karoz, the infantry on their heels, while the road from Istria was effectually closed for the time, at least. As to the fate of Istria itself, that must be determined

by subsequent events.

And so, in the flush of his triumph, he had illuminated his palace, and caused a banquet to be spread, and summoned guests from Karoz; and good Mohammedan, which he was not,

had caused the vintage wines to flow like water.

Divers nations were represented at his board. There were two German army officers, an English racing man, come horse-buying to Karoz, and another to shoot moufflon, a lieutenant from a French man-of-war lying at Saloniki, a low-browed Servian prince, and two Russian agents of the Douma, there to observe the separation of Karamania as dogs watch the strokes of

the butcher's knife.

The wine had flowed freely; the semidiplomatic dignity with which the banquet had begun was all but washed away in repeated magnums of its amber-colored, effervescent antidote; and when Hamdi had risen to his feet and, in a few graceful and serious words, described the progress of his campaign against what he was pleased to characterize as "the turbulent, half-savage people of the hills," followed by a brief outline of his future liberal policy, the enthusiasm of his guests became an uproar.

When the applause had in part subsided, a flushed-faced man rose some-

what unsteadily to his feet.

"Gentlemen," said he, in French, for that was the language current. "A toast! Long live King Hamdi the

First of Karamania!"

With a shout, the banqueters sprang to their feet, every glass raised high. But the health was destined never to be drunk; even as the pledge hung upon their lips, there came from without a sudden uproar and fierce voices, raised in savage admonition. Many footsteps clattered on the marble terrace; then the doors of the banqueting hall were flung wide, and a grisly figure, swathed in bandages which were blood-stained and covered with dust, stood upon the threshold and surveyed the revelers with keen, observant eyes. Behind him, the antechamber was filled with armed men, trooping forward, weapons in

Slowly the raised glasses were lowered, their contents spilled disregarded on the damask cloth. In wonder and awe the banqueters stared at this uncouth disturber of the feast. The powdery dust of the plains formed grimy shadows in the harsh lines of his pallid face; his clothes were cut and torn, powder-blackened and blood-stained through the layer of enveloping dust. One bandaged arm hung in a rude sling made from a stirrup-leather; the other closed on the butt of a heavy revolver.

Hamdi Pasha himself was the first to recover. He sprang to his feet and faced the intruders.

"Who are you?" he snarled, in French.

"I am Osborne Pasha. Where is the princess?"

"Thou dog of a mercenary!" Hamdi raised himself in his chair.

"Where is the princess, Turcoman? Answer!"

"How should I know?"

Dick took a quick step forward and thrust the muzzle of his revolver almost against the face of the Turk.

"Where is the princess, you swine? I shall not ask again!"

Hamdi Pasha sank back. Although no coward he saw his life hanging by a slender thread.

"She is in the harcemlick," he muttered.

"Unharmed?"

"Yes."

"Have her summoned. If you are lying you will go out of that chair upon your face!"

"I am not lying," snarled Hamdi.
He gave an order and a servant shuffled from the room.

Minutes passed. The guests sat in silence, staring at the table or sipping feverishly at the wine before them. Hamdi, sunk back into his chair, tugged at his long mustache, scowling savagely at his plate.

Behind him, on the threshold, stood Dick, motionless as a statue, his face like a mask of clay, his eyes like sapphires. Behind him were clustered the Akindschis, silent at first, but as the moments passed and the keen edge of their expectancy relaxed, beginning to mutter and whisper, and finally, irrepressible and light-hearted little war-

riors which they were, stifling back a

The minutes passed; the tension too long sustained began to subside. One of the Russians wrote a few words and showed it to his colleague who shook his head. The French officer muttered something to his neighbor, and both shrugged. Presently the English sportsman pushed back his chair.

"Are we to consider ourselves pris-

oners?" he growled.

"No," answered Dick. "You can go

when you like."

But the guests, curious to witness the dénouement, did not move. They waited in silence, and presently the big doors at the far end of the room were thrown open and the Princess Lilear appeared

upon the threshold.

She was still dressed in the white evening gown which she had been wearing the night before, when kidnaped by Hamdi's Montenegrins. Dazed and bewildered, she stood for a moment surveying the room with eyes almost hidden by their long, black lashes. The yellow light from the innumerable tapers shone creamily upon her pale face and beautifully molded neck and arms.

A murmur passed around the table, but the princess did not notice it. Her eyes had traveled past the glittering board, past the flushed and startled faces of the guests, past Hamdi Pasha as he sat tense and white and scowling, and on until they rested upon the figure of Dick as he stood motionless against the dark doorway of the antechamber, whence appeared the alert, swarthy faces of the Akindschis.

A little cry escaped the princess. She stepped forward into the full glare of the myriad tapers.

"Osborne Pasha!"

Dick did not answer; his eyes were searching her face with an intentness of expression which was almost cruel. Then suddenly his features softened, and with a sudden motion he flung his heavy revolver back into the holster.

"We have come to get you, princess," said he, smiling. "Your Akindschis

and I."

The princess looked at him wildly.

"But how, Osborne Pasha? How have you come?"

His smile turned grim.

"First we came across the Plain of Plev, where some dervishes tried to stop us. Most of them are dead. Then we took the road from Suruk to Karoz, and there we fell in with some Turkish infantry whom we persuaded to surrender. After that we passed our old friends, the Montenegrin Sepahis who——"

"You passed my Sepahis!" snarled Hamdi Pasha, turning in his chair. "Do you say that they let you by?"

"Do you say that they let you by?"
"Yes, Turcoman. They were all dead. Now we have come to get our

queen!"

He stepped quickly forward, seized a goblet, filled it to the brim with champagne, then raised it to the princess.

"I drink," said Dick, "to Her Christian Majesty, Queen Lilear of Karamania!"

A week later a midnight council was held in the Hall of the Janizaries at Istria.

The Princess Lilear was formally accepted as queen-elect. Kostovo was appointed prime minister and was instructed to arrange a marriage for the queen which should meet with the ap-

probation of her ministers.

Upon this, Kostovo announced that, anticipating the desires of her subjects, he was already in communication with certain royal personages and hoped shortly to be able to announce the betrothal of the queen to H. R. H., the Grand Duke Michael of Salzburg.

The council also voted, in consideration of a point raised by Osborne Pasha, and in face of the violent opposition of General Kostovo, that, should the Princess Lilear feel herself unwilling or unable to perform the duties of a sovereign, she was to be granted the right of abdication with a suitable allowance guaranteed by the crown.

It was furthermore voted that Osborne Pasha, in return for his distinguished services in the struggle for the freedom of Karamania, should receive for the next five years a small percentage of the export duties accruing to the crown on the revenues of the horse-

sales of the whole kingdom.

The ancient Hall of the Janizaries. once used for the accommodation of this corps which a former Ottoman law made obligatory, was a long, somber apartment, admirably preserved, with vaulted ceilings, and its walls pierced by the small openings of the numerous oda, or cells. At one end it communicated through a narrow arched doorway with the keep; at the other was a raised dais upon which was placed, according to Oriental custom, an enormous divan which took the place of a throne and was occupied by the individual of highest rank. The hall was lighted by two huge braziers of wroughtiron basket-work let into the heavy walls and filled with blazing fagots of pine, the smoke from which found its way out through vaulted windows in the arched roof.

During the council the princess herself had occupied the divan, Kostovo upon her right, and Dick, in his official position as commander-in-chief from which he had not yet been relieved, upon her left. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the councilors had dispersed rapidly and in silence, leaving with the princess only Dick and

Kostovo.

After a few minutes' discussion in regard to the decisions arrived at, Kostovo had excused himself, offering as a pretext some urgent business and requesting Dick to escort the princes

back to the palace.

For several moments after his departure, neither spoke. The princess sat like a figure of stone, staring straight down the gloomy hall, where the black shadows moved restlessly with the flicker of the red flames in the braziers, and the black openings of the oda suggested the lurking-places of sinister creatures of the dark. The glare from the low-burning embers was reflected ruddily from her face and touched the heavy coils of her hair with lurid tones of color.

But no hint or trace of any emotion

was betrayed by the lovely, inscrutable features. Straight down the hall she looked, nor did so much as the quiver of a single finger of the little hand, half hidden in the fold of her native Karamanian gown, reveal the thoughts

which passed behind her eyes.

At her side stood Dick, equally silent, equally immobile, waiting till it should please her to speak; and as the moments passed and the stillness was unbroken and the gloom deepened as the braziers burned low, a new-born tenderness began to stir within him. Some warm emotion, which was not entirely pity, awakened at sight of the proud, silent loneliness of the small veiled figure; something in the pathetic droop of the shoulders, even while the little head was held high, aroused in the man every deep, protective instinct.

For the council had told him much that he suspected. The Princess Lilear was to her people less an individual than a symbol. To her cabinet she was nothing more than a lay-figure from which to build their dynasty; to Kostovo, her mother's brother, she was even less, a tool with which to carve, his own fortune, a stepping-stone to his personal ambition, nor did he care how hard he

rod.

Acting on a sudden impulse, Dick stooped, took her hand as it lay cool and passive in a fold of the *feridjé* and carried it to his lips. A tremor, which he felt rather than saw, passed through the princess.

"Princess Lilear," he said, in a low

voice.

"Yes, Osborne Pasha?"
"I am your friend."

"You have always been that, Osborne Pasha."

"But you have not always known it —and I want you to know it now."
"But why now more than before?"

"Because I am going to advise you to do something for your country's good and your own. When you hear what it is you will be hurt and perhaps angry."

"I know already, Osborne Pasha. You want me to abdicate. I have

known it all the time."

Dick looked down at the princess and nodded slowly. He tried to see her face through the deepening gloom. An ember in one of the braziers flared up brilliantly and the shadows retreated into the deeper recesses of the gloomy hall,

In the sudden glare the figure of the princess, enveloped in the shimmering feridjé, seemed to move forward on the divan, standing out vividly against the deep tone of darkness beyond. Her yashmak was rolled up and twisted back across her white forehead, and the whole of her lovely face glowed suddenly with the warm, ruddy reflection from the crimson flare in the braziers.

As Dick looked down, her long lashes swept up and her eyes met his. The flaming embers expired; the darkness deepened in the place. Dick moved

restlessly.

"Forgive me, Osborne Pasha," said the princess. "I forgot that you are wounded. Sit here, upon the corner of the divan."

Dick thanked her and obeyed. For a moment both stared at the glowing coals without speaking. Then the princess said:

"Please tell me why you think that I should abdicate?"

"There are many reasons. Karamania should found a new and independent dynasty and not involve itself with entangling foreign relations through the marriage of her newly crowned queen. The country needs a king, a man who is strong and subtle and understands the spirit of his subjects. Now that we have banished Hamdi there is every chance for the country to progress if not torn by internal strife."

There was a moment's silence, broken

by the princess.

"That is how I have seen it for sev-

eral days past," she said.

"There are any number of reasons why you should abdicate," said Dick. "You could do nothing here alone. In fact, I don't think that I would leave you here alone."

The princess dropped her eyes.

"Why not, Osborne Pasha?" she murmured.

"Why not?" Dick's voice had the quick accent of surprise, "Becausewho would there be to look after you?"

"But why should you feel obliged to look after me?" The princess was plucking at the loose feridjé. The embers in the braziers were dying fast.

"But why shouldn't I?" he answered in the same tone of surprise. "Haven't I looked after you from the very start? Better than you cared to have me, at times, I'm afraid. Do you know, it's odd"-there was a puzzled, boyish tone in his voice-"but it seems the most natural thing in the world for me to take care of you. It seems as if I always had taken care of you, and"-the boyish voice grew a trifle breathless-"and as if I were always going to take care of you."

The princess did not answer; the silk feridjé rustled as her bosom rose and

fell beneath it.

"Do you think I'd leave you now?" Dick continued almost angrily. "You don't understand at all, Princess Lilear. Just because I had to haul you around once or twice, because there was no time to argue the thing out, you thought that I was a cross, ugly brute; and you hated me like fury for a few minutesdida't you?"

"Yes," whispered the princess. "But all the time I felt really happy, because I was taking care of you, although I was making rather a mess of it." He gave a short laugh.

"I was a fool," whispered the prin-

"No you weren't. How could you know?"

"Know what, Osborne Pasha?"
"How I felt. If you only could guess what I went through when we learned that you had been kidnaped by Hamdi!" He turned to her swiftly and his sleeve brushed the princess' shoulder. "I was nearly frantic. Five minutes before I'd been urging for the good of Karamania that the Akindschis should be mustered out, and Razamachi was yapping like a Stamboul cur. I was for shelving the whole business; and even when the scout came in and reported that the dervishes were marching on Istria I would have done no more than to order out the infantry. But when the sentry came on the run to say that you were gone -" He gave a grim laugh.

"You rode out of Istria at the head of a thousand Akindschis!" cried the princess, leaning toward him. "Why did you do that, Osborne Pasha? For

Karamania?"

Her breath was almost on his cheek, and in the dim light her great eyes

glowed into his face.

For several moments Dick did not answer; in the darkness the princess saw his broad shoulders moving with each deep breath. When he spoke it was with a voice which she had never heard before upon his lips.

"No-for you."

The princess was almost stifled by the beating of her heart.

"Why, Dick Pasha?" she asked trem-

ulously.

The braziers glowed a little brighter, and in the dim light the princess tried to see his face. Dick moved his hand; it touched that of the princess which instinctively turned palm upward to clasp his own. Her rapid breathing reached him through the warm, pulsing silence.

"I-I know now-Lilear," he answered. "Allah Akbar! What a blind,

driveling fool I've been!"

"What do you know, Dick Pasha?" The princess' voice was very faint.

"I know that I love you! I have

loved you through it all!"

"Even when-

"Yes, dear, even when we fought; when I was rough and you were furiously angry. I'm afraid that we are both half-savage people, sweetheart, but we are that which we are-"

"Dick-Dick Pasha!"

"Darling!"

"Hamdi was right. I am a-a Kara-

manian."

"Whatever you may be you are my natural mate." Dick's low voice vibrated with a passionate intensity. "I am none too civilized myself, sweetheart." A note of laughter rumbled in his chest. "Can you love such a medieval ruf-

"Oh, Dick! You are a man—and you are kind—and tender. It is I who am the savage. Life runs close to the surface here in the Orient. And I love

you so!"

But the princess did not finish the sentence, for two strong arms had gathered her in, yashmak, feridjé and all, and her quivering lips still murmuring inaudibly were crushed against those of the mate allotted her by the gods of East and West.

"Dick-Dick Pasha!"

"Yes, darling."

"I have loved you since you kissed me in the grape-arbor when we were children, when I had beaten the peasant for killing the chicken."

He kissed her again. "What a lot of time we've lost! Never mind, little girl, we will not lose much more. We will be married right straight away, give our blessing to Karamania, get

Kostovo to give us a troop of Akindschis as far as the frontier, and take the Orient Express for Paris."

"But Dick, darling, can we be married that way? You're a Christian."

"So are you at heart."

"But I don't know what I am!" she cried in distress. "We Karamanians are supposed to be part Mohammedan, part pantheist—whatever that may be."

He gave her a laughing kiss. "We'll get a Bulgarian bishop and a Grand Lama and a Patriarch and a Yogi and a Vaisee dervish, and tell them all to get to work at once!"

"The braziers have gone out, Dick."
His arms closed tenderly about her.
"Poor little princess," he said. "To think that, after all, she never will be queen."

The princess nestled close.

"Yes, Dick Pasha," she murmured. "I shall be queen—though not of Karamania."



# THE TRUTH

THAT glorious flame that was my youth Is burnt to ashes, flung And scattered, and I know the truth— I, who one day was young.

Wisdom is mine my peers among, No craft my skill defies; I hear beyond the flattering tongue And see beyond surmise.

And this my wisdom—I, grown wise, Would toss it all in fee For one of Youth's exquisite lies That one day cheated me.

For this is wisdom's worth—to see
That ignorance was fair.
And more than Truth is Comedy
With rose-leaves on her hair.
THEODOSIA GARRISON.





HERE are many kinds of fools. Now, will everybody please sit still until they are called upon specifically to rise?

I had been every kind of fool except

one. I had expended my patrimony, pretended my matrimony, played poker, lawn-tennis, and bucket-shops—parted soon with my money in many ways. But there remained one rôle of the wearer of cap and bells that I had not played. That was the Seeker after Buried Treasure. To few does the delectable furor come. But of all the would-be followers in the hoof-prints of King Midas none has found a pursuit so rich in pleasurable promise.

But, going back from my theme a while—as lame pens must do—I was a fool of the sentimental sort. I saw May Martha Mangum, and was hers, She was eighteen, the color of the white ivory keys of a new piano, beautiful, and possessed by the exquisite solemnity and pathetic witchery of an unsophisticated angel doomed to live in a small, dull, Texas prairie-town. She had a spirit and charm that could have enabled her to pluck rubies like raspberries from the crown of Belgium or any other sporty kingdom, but she did not know it, and I did not paint the picture for her.

You see, I wanted May Martha Mangum for to have and to hold. I wanted her to abide with me, and put my slippers and pipe away every day in places where they cannot be found of evenings. May Martha's father was a man hidden behind whiskers and spectacles. He lived for bugs and butterflies and all insects that fly or crawl or buzz or get down your back or in the butter. He was an etymologist, or words to that effect. He spent his life seining the air for flying fish of the June-bug order, and then sticking pins through 'em and calling 'em names.

He and May Martha were the whole family. He prized her highly as a fine specimen of the racibus humanus because she saw that he had food at times, and put his clothes on right side before, and kept his alcohol-bottles filled. Scientists, they say, are apt to be absent-minded.

There was another besides myself who thought May Martha Mangum one to be desired. That was Goodloe Banks, a young man just home from college. He had all the attainments to be found in books—Latin, Greek, philosophy, and especially the higher branches of mathematics and logic.

If it hadn't been for his habit of pouring out this information and learning on every one that he addressed I'd have liked him pretty well. But, even as it was, he and I were, you would have thought, great pals.

We got together every time we could because each of us wanted to pump the other for whatever straws we could to find which way the wind blew from the heart of May Martha Mangum—rather a mixed metaphor; Goodloe Banks would never have been guilty of that. That is the way of rivals.

You might say that Goodloe ran to books, manners, culture, rowing, intellect, and clothes. I would have put you in mind more of baseball and Fridaynight debating societies-by way of culture-and maybe of a good horse-

back rider.

But, in our talks together and in our visits and conversation with May Martha neither Goodloe Banks nor I could find out which one of us she preferred. May Martha was a naturalborn non-committal; and knew in her cradle how to keep people guessing.

As I said, old man Mangum was absent-minded. After a long time he found out one day-a little butterfly must have told him-that two young men were trying to throw a net over the head of the young person, a daughter, or some such technical appendage, who looked after his comforts.

I never knew scientists could rise to such occasions. Old Mangum orally labeled and classified Goodloe and myself easily among the lowest orders of the vertebrates; and in English, too, without going any further into Latin than the simple references to Orgetorix, Rex Helvetii-which is as far as I ever went, myself. And he told us that if he ever caught us around his house again he would add us to his collection.

Goodloe Banks and I remained away five days, expecting the storm to sub-When we dared to call at the house again May Martha Mangum and her father were gone. Gone! house they had rented was closed. Their little store of goods and chattels was

gone also.

And not a word of farewell to either of us from May Martha-not a white, fluttering note pinned to the hawthornbush; not a chalk-mark on the gatepost nor a post-card in the post-office

to give us a clue.

For two months Goodloe Banks and I-separately-tried every scheme we could think of to track the runaways. We used our friendship and influence with the ticket-agent, with livery-stable men, railroad conductors, and our one lone, lorn constable, but without re-

Then we became better friends and worse enemies than ever. We foregathered in the back room of Snyder's saloon every afternoon after work, and played dominoes, and laid conversational traps to find out from each other if anything had been discovered. That

is the way of rivals.

Now, Goodloe Banks had a sarcastic way of displaying his own learning and putting me in the class that was reading "Poor Jane Ray, her bird is dead, she cannot play." Well, I rather liked Goodloe, and I had a contempt for his college learning, and I was always regarded as good-natured, so I kept my temper. And I was trying to find out if he knew anything about May Martha, so I endured his society.

In talking things over one afternoon

he said to me:

"Suppose you do find her, Ed, whereby would you profit? Miss Mangum has a mind. Perhaps it is yet uncultured, but she is destined for higher things than you could give her. I have talked with no one who seemed to appreciate more the enchantment of the ancient poets and writers and the modern cults that have assimilated and expended their philosophy of life. Don't you think you are wasting your time

looking for her?"

"My idea," said I, "of a happy home is an eight-room house in a grove of live-oaks by the side of a charco on a Texas prairie. A piano," I went on, "with an automatic player in the sitting-room, three thousand head of cattle under fence for a starter, a buckboard and ponies always hitched at a post for 'the missus'-and May Martha Mangum to spend the profits of the ranch as she pleases, and to abide with me, and put my slippers and pipe away every day in places where they cannot be found of evenings. That," said I, "is what is to be—and a fig, a dried, Smyrna, dago-stand fig for your curriculums, cults and philosophy."

"She is meant for higher things," re-

peated Goodloe Banks.

"Whatever she is meant for," I answered, "just now she is out of pocket. And I shall find her as soon as I can without aid of the colleges."

"The game is blocked," said Goodloe,

putting down a domino; and we had

Shortly after that a young farmer whom I knew came into town and brought me a folded blue paper. He said his grandfather had just died. I concealed a tear; and he went on to say that the old man had jealously guarded this paper for twenty years. He left it to his family as part of his estate, the rest of which consisted of two mules and a hypotenuse of nonarable land.

The sheet of paper was of the old, blue kind used during the rebellion of the abolitionists against the secessionists. It was dated June 14, 1863; and it described the hiding-place of ten burro-loads of gold and silver coin valued at three hundred thousand dollars. Old Rundle-grandfather of his grandson, Sam-was given the information by a Spanish priest who was in on the treasure-burying, and who died many years before-no, afterward-in old Rundle's house. Old Rundle wrote it down from dictation.

"Why didn't your father look this up?" I asked young Rundle.

"He went blind before he could do so," he replied.

"Why didn't you hunt for it, your-

self?" I asked.

"Well," said he, "I've only known about the paper for ten years. First there was the spring plowin' to do, and then choppin' the weeds out of the corn; and then come takin' fodder; and mighty soon winter was on us. It seemed to run along that way year af-

That sounded perfectly reasonable to me, so I took it up with young Lee

Rundle at once.

The directions on the paper were The whole burro cavalcade simple. laden with the treasure started from an old Spanish mission in Dolores County. They traveled due south by the compass until they reached the Alamito River. They forded this, and buried the treasure on the top of a little mountain shaped like a pack-saddle standing in a row between two higher ones. A heap of stones marked the place of the buried treasure. All the party except the Spanish priest were killed by Indians a few days later. The secret was a monopoly. It looked good to me.

Lee Rundle suggested that we rig out a camping outfit, hire a surveyor to run out the line from the Spanish mission, and then spend the three hundred thousand dollars seeing the sights in Fort Worth. But, without being highly educated, I knew a way to save time and expense.

We went to the State land-office, and had a practical, what they call a "working," sketch made of all the surveys of land from the old mission to the Alamito River. On this map I drew a line due southward to the river. The length of lines of each survey and section of land was accurately given on the sketch. By these we found the point on the river and had a "connection" made with it, and an important, well-identified corner of the Los Animos five-league survey-a grant made by King Philip of Spain.

By doing this we did not need to have the line run out by a surveyor, It was a great saving of expense and

So. Lee Rundle and I fitted out a two-horse wagon team with all the accessories, and drove a hundred and forty-nine miles to Chico, the nearest town to the point we wished to reach. There we picked up a deputy county surveyor. He found the corner of the Los Animos survey for us, ran out the five thousand seven hundred and twenty varas west that our sketch called for, laid a stone on the spot, had coffee and bacon, and caught the mail-stage back to Chico.

I was pretty sure we would get that three hundred thousand dollars. Lee Rundle's was to be only one-third, because I was paying all the expenses. With that two hundred thousand dollars I knew I could find May Martha Mangum if she was on earth. And with it I could flutter the butterflies in old man Mangum's dove-cot, too. If I could find that treasure!

But Lee and I established camp. Across the river were a dozen little mountains densely covered by cedarbrakes, but not one shaped like a pack-That did not deter us. pearances are deceptive. A pack-saddle, like beauty, may exist only in the

eye of the beholder.

I and the grandson of the treasure examined those cedar-covered hills with the care of a lady hunting for the wicked flea. We explored every side, top, circumference, mean elevation, angle, slope and concavity of every one for two miles up and down the river. We spent four days doing so. Then we hitched up the roan and the dun, and hauled the remains of the coffee and bacon the one hundred and fortynine miles back to Concho City.

Lee Rundle chewed much tobacco on the return trip. I was busy driving be-

cause I was in a hurry.

As shortly as could be after our empty return Goodloe Banks and I foregathered in the back room of Snyder's saloon to play dominoes and fish for information. I told Goodloe about my expedition after the buried treasure.

"If I could have found that three hundred thousand dollars," I said to him, "I could have scoured and sifted the surface of the earth to find May

Martha Mangum."

"She is meant for higher things," said Goodloe. "I shall find her myself. But, tell me how you went about discovering the spot where this unearthed increment was imprudently buried."

I told him in the smallest detail. showed him the draftsman's sketch with the distances marked plainly upon it.

After glancing over it in a masterly way, he leaned back in his chair and bestowed upon me an explosion of sardonic, superior, collegiate laughter.

"Well, you are a fool, Jim," he said,

when he could speak.

"It's your play," said I patiently,

fingering my double-six.

"Twenty," said Goodloe, making two crosses on the table with his chalk. "Why am I a fool?" I asked, "Buried treasure has been found before in many

the point on the river where your line

"Because," said he, "in calculating

would strike you neglected to allow for the variation. The variation there would be nine degrees west. Let me have your pencil."

Goodloe Banks figured rapidly on the

back of an envelope.

"The distance, from north to south, of the line run from the Spanish mission," said he, "is exactly twenty-two miles. It was run by a pocket-compass, according to your story. Allowing for the variation, the point on the Alamito River where you should have searched for your treasure is exactly six miles and nine hundred and forty-five varas farther west than the place you hit upon. Oh, what a fool you are, Jim!"

"What is this variation that you speak of?" I asked. "I thought figures never

"The variation of the magnetic compass," said Goodloe, "from the true meridian."

He smiled in his superior way; and then I saw come out in his face the singular, eager, consuming cupidity of the seeker after buried treasure.

"Sometimes," he said, with the air of the oracle, "these old traditions of hidden money are not without foundation. Suppose you let me look over that paper describing the location. Perhaps

together we might-

The result was that Goodloe Banks and I, rivals in love, became companions in adventure. We went to Chico by stage from Huntersburg, the nearestrailroad town. In Chico we hired a team drawing a covered spring-wagon and camping paraphernalia. We had the same surveyor run out our distance, as revised by Goodloe and his variations, and then dismissed him and sent him on his homeward road.

It was night when we arrived. I fed the horses and made a fire near the bank of the river and cooked supper. Goodloe would have helped; but his education had not fitted him for prac-

tical things.

But, while I worked he cheered me with the expression of great thoughts handed down from the dead ones of old. He quoted some translations from the Greek at much length.

"Anacreon," he explained. "That was a favorite passage with Miss Mangum-as I recited it.

"She is meant for higher things,"

said I, repeating his phrase.

"Can there be anything higher," asked Goodloe, "than to dwell in the society of the classics, to live in the atmosphere of learning and culture? You have often decried education. What of your wasted efforts through your ignorance of simple mathematics? How soon would you have found your treasure if my knowledge had not shown you your error?"

"We'll take a look at those hills across the river first," said I, "and see what we find. I am still doubtful about variations. I have been brought up to believe that the needle is true to the

pole."

The next morning was a bright June one. We were up early and had breakfast. Goodloe was charmed. He recited-Keats, I think it was, and Kelly or Shelley, while I broiled the bacon. We were getting ready to cross the river, which was little more than a shallow creek there, and explore the many sharp-peaked, cedar-covered hills on the other side.

"My good Ulysses," said Goodloe, slapping me on the shoulder while I was washing the tin breakfast-plates, "let me see the enchanted document once more. I believe it gives directions for climbing the hill shaped like a packsaddle. I never saw a pack-saddle. What is it like, Jim?"

"Score one against culture," said I.

"I'll know it when I see it."

Goodloe was looking at old Rundle's document when he ripped out a most uncollegiate swear-word.

"Come here," he said, holding the paper up against the sunlight. "Look at that," he said, laying his finger against

On the blue paper—a thing I had never noticed before-I saw stand out in white letters the word and figures: "Malvern, 1898."

"What about it?" I asked.

"It's the water-mark," said Goodloe.

"The paper was manufactured in 1898. The writing on the paper is dated 1863. This is a palpable fraud."

"Oh, I don't know," said I. "The Rundles are pretty reliable, plain, uneducated country people. Maybe the paper manufacturers tried to perpetrate a swindle."

And then Goodloe Banks went as wild as his education permitted. He dropped the glasses off his nose and glared at me.

"I've often told you you were a fool," he said. 'You have let yourself be imposed upon by a clodhopper. And you have imposed upon me.

"How," I asked, "have I imposed upon you?"

"By your ignorance," said he. "Twice I have discovered serious flaws in your plans that a common-school education should have enabled you to avoid. And," he continued, "I have been put to expense that I could ill afford in pursuing this swindling quest. I am done with it."

I rose and pointed a large pewter spoon at him, fresh from the dish-wa-

"Goodloe Banks," I said, "I care not one parboiled navy bean for your education. I always barely tolerated it in any one, and I despised it in you. What has your learning done for you? It is a curse to yourself and a bore to your Away," I said, "away with friends. your water-marks and variations! They are nothing to me. They shall not deflect me from the quest."

I pointed with my spoon across the river to a small mountain shaped like a

pack-saddle.

"I am going to search that mountain," I went on, "for the treasure. Decide now whether you are in it or not. If you wish to let a water-mark or a variation shake your soul, you are no true adventurer. Decide.'

A white cloud of dust began to rise far down the river road. It was the mail-wagon from Hesperus to Chico.

Goodloe flagged it.

"I am done with the swindle," said he sourly. "No one but a fool would pay any attention to that paper now. Well, you always were a fool, Jim. I leave you to your fate."

He gathered his personal traps, climbed into the mail-wagon, adjusted his glasses nervously, and flew away in a cloud of dust.

After I had washed the dishes and staked the horses on new grass, I crossed the shallow river and made my way slowly through the cedar-brakes up to the top of the hill shaped like a pack-saddle.

It was a wonderful June day. Never in my life had I seen so many birds, so many butterflies, dragon-flies, grasshoppers, and such winged and stinged beasts of the air and fields.

I investigated the hill shaped like a pack-saddle from base to summit. I found an absolute absence of signs relating to buried treasure. There was no pile of stones, no ancient blazes on the trees, none of the evidences of the three hundred thousand dollars, as set forth in the document of old man Rundle

I came down the hill in the cool of the afternoon. Suddenly, out of the cedar-brake I stepped into a beautiful green valley where a tributary small stream ran into the Alamito River.

And there I was startled to see what I took to be a wild man, with unkempt beard and ragged hair, pursuing a giant butterfly with brilliant wings.

"Perhaps he is an escaped madman," I thought; and wondered how he had

strayed so far from seats of education

and learning.

And then I took a few more steps and saw a vine-covered cottage near the small stream. And, in a little grassy glade, I saw May Martha Mangum plucking wild flowers.

She straightened up and looked at me. For the first time since I knew her I saw her face—which was the color of the white keys of a new piano—turn pink. I walked toward her without a word. She let the gathered flowers trickle slowly from her hand to the grass.

"I knew you would come, Jim," she said clearly. "Father wouldn't let me write, but I knew you would come."

What followed you may guess—there was my wagon and team just across the river.

I've often wondered what good too much education is to a man if he can't use it for himself. If all the benefits of it are to go to others where does it come in?

For, May Martha Mangum abides with me. There is an eight-room house in a live-oak grove, and a piano with an automatic-player, and a good start toward the three thousand head of cattle is under fence.

And when I ride home at night my pipe and slippers are put away in places where they cannot be found.

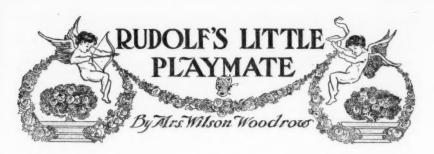
But, who cares for that—who cares - who cares?



## ON A SUN-DIAL

L IFE is but a little race,
And soon is run;
So every hour I turn my face
Up to the sun.

Love is but a little round
Of happy hours;
May every one, like mine, be crowned
With sun and flowers.
Torrance Benjamin,





RS. EATON stood in her spacious and beautiful old garden, London-Purpleing her plants. The leaves of her bright, beautiful but helpless blossoms she sprinkled careful-

ly and with a stern, professional satisfaction—the wise physician administering nauseous but necessary doses; when suddenly her hand trembled and she started violently at the hoarse honk of

an approaching motor.

A little frown gathered on her brow, a frown of irritation that she had never been able to accustom her nerves to that honk and puff and whiz and smell; and she looked up and sighed. It really seemed too bad that the quiet elm-shaded streets of Herronsville, most placid of country towns, should be invaded by these gleaming, panting monsters. History, she reflected gloomily, but repeated itself. The motor was but the modern reappearance of the dragon of old, a creature of swift approach and glittering scales and flaming nostrils and a well-developed taste for running down big game; and, the frown growing deeper, never a Saint George on the horizon.

But Mrs. Eaton did more than frown and reflect; she stared and sniffed. Dear me! The thing was stopping before her own gate, and a lady, a young lady, was shedding a dust-coat, and unswathing herself from a cloud of veils, and removing her goggles, and preparing to get out; and close behind her was a man, a middle-aged, dejected-

looking man with slightly stooping shoulders, dull eyes, and the most melancholy of mustaches.

Mrs. Eaton drew her spectacles down from her brow and adjusted them over her eyes. Who was this stranger opening the gate in that assured manner and advancing down the path in the broad morning sunshine? A dazzling vision, it must be confessed, with a roselined sunshade tilted over one shoulder, a rose-wreathed hat on her elaborately dressed hair, a rose flush on her slightly faded cheek, and roses tucked in the belt of her white, embroidered, linen gown, all assisting at, and almost effecting, an admirable illusion of youth.

"Agnes!" cried the rose-and-white lady, when about ten paces from the severe (?) disapproving (?) repellent (?) formidable (?) Mrs. Eaton. Ah, let it go at all of them. Each serves. It is difficult to choose an adjective fitly defining the ideals-of-my-Puritan-forefathers-are-good-enough-for-me pose of

Mrs. Eaton.

"Agnes, is it really you, and the dear old place! You remember Rudolf, of course," carelessly indicating the gentleman, who gazed with boiled and weary eyes at the old garden and the substantial brick house with the green shutters bowed to keep out the sun, and its broad porch with the great clumps of day lilies on either side of the steps.

"The same, dear, peaceful old spot where you and I have spent so many happy hours together." The rose-andwhite lady fell into sentiment somewhat unskilfully. Then more naturally and with a pardonable irritation: "Agnes! Do mend your manners and don't stand staring at me as if you were the Prophet Elijah and I were Jezebel!"

"Bertha! Bertha Whittington!" exclaimed Mrs. Eaton in slow, deep tones. "Well, I am glad that you still remember the Prophet Elijah; and your husband, of course, I recall——" Mrs. Eaton paused doubtfully.

"It really is I, you know," advanced Mr. Whittington unexpectedly, "although time and Bertha have done

their work very thoroughly."

"Oh, Rudolf, how absurd! But we've taken a place for the summer, Agnes, only about fifty miles from here, and so I thought I'd run over and see you and the scenes of my childhood this morning."

"Fifty miles!" and "Run over this morning!" There was a touch of sacrilege in this lightly accepted annihilation of time and space, a wanton and blasphemous assumption of the power of man which shocked Mrs. Eaton speechless for a moment.

"Yes, we've taken the old Witherspoon place," went on Mrs. Whittington. "You see, Rudolf insisted on being near his beloved horses."

Mrs. Eaton strove to adjust her mind to this curious statement. Why could not Mr. Whittington have his

horses near him anywhere?

"And you live here year after year?" Mrs. Whittington raked house and garden with a comprehensive glance through her upraised lorgnon. "Dear me! And all alone. But no," with an obvious effort of memory, "you have children, have you not? A boy—"

"I have one daughter."

"A daughter! How dear! And is she anything like you? But of course she is, living here year in year out and doing the same things over and over again. I dare say you are as alike as two peas."

"No." Mrs. Eaton had for so many years shut her mouth in stern, uncompromising disapproval of so many things that she had grooves in her upper lip. These became so apparent that that feature had almost the appearance

of a ruffle. "I am afraid she takes af-

ter her father's family."

"Ah, yes," said Mrs. Whittington vaguely. "Ah, yes, I remember now, and he belonged like yourself to the élite of Herronsville. I did not, you remember. It was a great thing for me, Agnes, when you chose me as your intimate friend. Then you married dear, irresponsible, charming Albert, and I married Rudolf here with his old name and his fortune, and the fortune has steadily increased, in spite of our efforts to prevent its doing so, hasn't it, Rudolf? If I remember rightly, your Albert, although of the élite, was not of the elect. It was rather a come-down for you, wasn't it? Not socially, but spiritually." She laughed, amused at her own neatness of phrasing.

Mrs. Eaton drew herself up an inch or two, that is, in the flesh; mentally

she towered.

"I hope and believe that it would be quite impossible for one of my blood to come down spiritually, as you call it. As for Alberta, I have done what I could, but the Eaton strain is strong. Every effort I make toward training and discipline is almost completely nullified by her Uncle Timothy, Albert's brother, and with all the family tendencies in an exaggerated degree."

"Mother! Mother!" A voice "fresh as the morn and as the morning clear" rang through the air, and across the lawn came a girl in a blue cotton frock with a roly-poly fox-terrier puppy in her arms which struggled and snapped and made frantic and ineffec-

tual efforts to bite her chin.

"Oh, Agnes! This is never yours! You darling, come here and speak to your mother's old friend. Rudolf, isn't she sweet?" Mrs. Whittington spent herself in enthusiasm.

"Mother's friend! But you must be years younger than mother!" cried Alberta, involuntarily glancing from the white-speckled black print of her mother to the roses and embroideries of her mother's friend.

"We are the same age within a month, Alberta," said Mrs. Eaton, with cold emphasis. "And you, dear," affirmed Mrs. Whittington, "are coming over at once to stop with me. You are coming day after to-morrow. Yes, Rudolf and Agnes, I have quite decided; and you are going to stay a fortnight."

"I am afraid, Bertha, that will be impossible." The grooves in Mrs. Eaton's upper lip became more pronounced than

ever.

"Oh, mother!" pleaded Alberta. Her mouth implored, her eyes coaxed. "Oh, mother!" To go with this wonderful rose-and-white lady into the great world.

"I fear that her wardrobe will hardly be adequate," again objected Mrs.

Eaton.

"Oh, my dear Agnes, when one has sapphire eyes and pink satin cheeks and such hair and such grace, one doesn't need anything but two or three white frocks. Of course, when one is a little older, it is different. I wear clothes, you do not. Oh, do not look at me like It is no use getting on your Prophet Elijah expression. I repeat that you are not clothed. You are covered, of course; but you do not wear clothes, and your refusal to wear them makes you rather distinguished. You might be taken for an English duchess, you're so dowdy. Do you play bridge, dear?" laying her hand over Alberta's.

Mrs. Eaton reared her head, the light of battle in her eye. "Emphatically, she does not," she replied in deep, vibrating tones, "and I will not let her go to you for a day, Bertha Whittington, if you attempt to teach her anything

of the kind."

"On the contrary, I am delighted to hear that she does not," said Mrs. Whittington carelessly. "Rudolf here loathes it, don't you, dear? And he is complaining bitterly that I have filled the house up with bridge fiends like myself. I shall now go back in triumph and tell them that I have found him a little playmate. Don't you want to be Rudolf's little playmate, Alberta?"

And Alberta flushed and lifted shy eyes shyly to Rudolf's, and Rudolf smiled one of his very rare, not bored, not particularly bored, smiles at Alberta, and then she nodded and the matter was settled.

Now mind, child, this is Monday," proclaimed Mrs. Whittington in her high voice, "and on Wednesday afternoon I am going to send the motor over for you, and my maid shall bring you a dust-coat and goggles, and we are going to kidnap you for a week or two." She touched the girl's cheek caressingly and gazed at her meditatively. "Agnes"-there was positive awe in her tones-"how on earth did you ever achieve it? You owe a debt of gratitude to poor dear Albert." She shook her rose-lined parasol, fluttered through the gate and into her car. The motor puffed and wheezed, and disappeared in a cloud of dust, and Alberta felt as did Cinderella when she saw her fairy godmother and the pumpkin coach vanish.

But the fairy godmother had bequeathed her two days of the busiest preparation, punctuated with precept, axiom and admonition on her mother's part, and unfailing and interested sympathy on the part of her Uncle Tim.

Ever since Alberta had been a little child she had been roused to a sense of passionate protection and hot partizan sympathy by her mother's manner of referring to this beloved friend and consoler as "Your Uncle Timothy," in a tone which implied resignation, disapproval and reprobation, and invariably and effectually disclaimed all personal interest and responsibility.

Now, Uncle Timothy was the type of the good, kindly, careless country lawyer. All day long he sat with his feet up on his office-table, an office where the windows were never washed and the books were never dusted. When he came home to his old house which had belonged to his father and grandfather before him, he fussed over his beautiful plants and smoked his pipe in the cool of the evening; at the same time playing guide, philosopher and friend to Alberta. His garden and her mother's adjoined, and Alberta always slipped through a convenient gap in the separating hedge.

Propinquity alone accounted for the I-Albert-take-thee-Agnes, and propin-

quity was at her world-old tricks again, for Ernest Wakefield, "the brilliant young prosecuting attorney of our little city," as the one daily newspaper called him, not only occupied Uncle Tim's office as junior partner, but he shared his home as well. So when Uncle Tim and Alberta loitered about the garden in the evening and Alberta counted three new buds on the Meteor rose, and announced that the coreopsis was doing splendidly, but that she thought the rose geraniums looked spindling, why, Ernest usually accompanied them.

But on the Tuesday evening just before the momentous Wednesday, when Alberta ran through the gap in the hedge for "a moment with Uncle Tim," instead of the usual joyous welcome, she found the two men smoking rather moodily in chairs under the trees, and watching a tiny moon like a little silver boat go sailing through the blue sky; and Alberta felt slightly chilled, and it was quite a minute or two before she could be led on to speak eagerly and joyously of the visit she was to

She was still in the full and happy tide of her expectations when her mother's voice sounded the inevitable "Alberta." The girl jumped to her feet, Ernest Wakefield did the same, and then she kissed Uncle Tim good-by on the top of his head and both cheeks.

make.

"Have a good time for once, Berta, without feeling as if you had been stealing sheep and, wait a moment—here's a hundred dollars. You may need it."

"Oh, Uncle Tim! It's a fortune! What on earth can I do with it? Oh, I know, I'll save it for—"

"For what now?" asked the old man testily. "I didn't give it to you to save. For what are you wanting to save it?"

Alberta blushed as red as the Meteor roses. "For my trousseau, if I ever get married," she replied confusedly. "Oh, mother is calling again!"

On her way to the hedge Ernest impassionately and fervently pointed out to her the evils of letting money burn a hole in one's pocket, and since Alberta

had decided to spend her Uncle Tim's tip on her trousseau, the sooner she began to do so the better, and so earnestly did he plead and so kindly did Alberta incline a willing ear that the moon sailed leagues and leagues through the blue sky and Mrs. Eaton and Uncle Tim both fell asleep in their chairs.

But the momentous Wednesday duly dawned and true to her promise, Mrs. Whittington sent her maid and the motor, and Alberta arrived at her destination in good time. She was very much excited and rather frightened as she slipped into a white organdie frock, and descended the broad, shallow steps, and walked out to the porch with its bright awnings and rugs and lounging chairs, and the blue sea smiling beyond the yellow sand-dunes. There seemed a quantity of people, men and women, and the women were all so gorgeously gowned that their frocks made Alberta gasp, and they talked so fast and laughed so much and were all so familiar and intimate that she felt quite uncomfortable and outside of it all.

Mrs. Whittington greeted her with a sort of affectionate carelessness, and introduced her to two or three people, who very promptly ignored her for their own particular topics of interest, and she was having anything but a good time. She felt quite forlorn and very young and sensitive and out of place, and so she was, for in all this faultless and finished imitation of youth, the real thing was, the ladies felt, a jarring and crude note.

Presently, however, she heard Mr. Whittington's voice behind her, and turned to greet him with such manifest relief and pleasure that Rudolf felt almost touched, and determined then and there that, as he mentally expressed it, she should have the time of her life.

He cast about in his mind to see what would best amuse her, and spoke tentatively of horses. She became at once so enthusiastic that Rudolf's weary eyes brightened.

"Fond of the races?" he asked.
"They're on here now."

"I never saw a race," said Alberta.

"You've never seen the horses run," exclaimed Rudolf in tones of slow, horrified astonishment. He lifted his glasses to his languid eyes and stared at her as if she were some rare specimen-bug glued to a card.

Alberta blushed. To blush is a radiant accomplishment when one is eighteen, a depressing bêtise when one is thirty. Alberta was eighteen

is thirty. Alberta was eighteen.

"No, but I would like to," she said, with a mixture of bravery and timidity.

"Of course she has never seen a race," interposed Mrs. Whittington protectingly from the other end of the table. "She is a dear, little country mouse, and she has other interests besides seeing the brutes run around in

rings."

It happened that, though Alberta had been solemnly cautioned on the subject of bridge, her mother, not having grasped the inner meaning of Mrs. Whittington's reference to the horses, had neglected to put her veto upon that hazardous and expensive form of amusement; therefore, Alberta felt justified in ignoring the voice of the inward mentor which endeavored to inform her of what "mother" would say, and consequently, she had no hesitation in accepting her host's invitation to accompany him to the track the following afternoon.

On his part, he felt that he was initiating her into the one great delight in life, doing a good turn for a fellow being, and incidentally one for himself, for, as he chucklingly explained to Mrs. Whittington, he meant

Alberta to pick the winners.

"She will have beginner's luck," he asserted. "They always do, and I have played the horses long enough to know that a hat-pin choice is as good as any

man's dope."

So Alberta, her incipient scruples quickly and quietly disposed of, fastened a jade bracelet on her arm for luck, and obediently shut her eyes, and speared the pages of past performances with a moonstone hat-pin also for luck, and Mr. Whittington smiled with saurian benignity and showed her a great bundle of bank-notes which he as-

sured her would be double in size before the afternoon was over.

"But that will be betting, will it not?" asked Alberta in a rather awed

voice.

"Not at all," Mr. Whittington hastened to reassure her; "in this case it seems to be putting your money on an

absolutely sure thing."

Alberta was aware of a slight pain in her conscience as they whizzed along toward the race-course in Mr. Whittington's motor, Rudolf meanwhile explaining the modus operandi of the game with a fluency and animation which he only exhibited when discoursing on this loved theme.

But once at the club-house, she speedily forgot the pain in her conscience, forgot everything in the interest and excitement of the moment.

The vivacity and color of the scene enraptured her. The picturesque clubhouse, the stunningly gowned women on its porches, the men all discussing one topic, the deep blue sky above the green velvet turf, the shining, lean, restive mounts bestrode by jockeys, scarlet and white and black and yellow and green and blue.

Then the thrilling moment when a cloud of dust resolved itself into a wild dash of horses, and that last supreme second when, the winner a nose ahead, they thundered past the club-house, and the grand stand seemed to heave in great billows of people and break in a roar, hoarse and deep as that of the

surf.

When, after the first race, Alberta became aware of herself and her surroundings, Mr. Whittington was shaking her joyously by the hand.

"By Jove, little playmate, you've done it," he cried. "Beginner's luck. I said so. Wouldn't surprise me one bit if

you'd pick them all."

Not quite all, only five winners in six races, as Alberta discovered at the close of the afternoon; and when Rudolf insisted, in spite of her protestations, on sharing his profits with her she experienced for the first time the iridescent dream of the human race—to gather grapes of thorn and figs of

thistle, and reap where one has not sown.

She herself could not comprehend at all until she saw the bank-notes fluttering in her hand. Then the heady wine of elation coursed through her veins and went to her head, and she gazed at the dejected losers about her with an

inward contempt.

How stupid to lose when it was so absolutely easy to win! Every one crowded about her, and congratulated her, and begged her to pick winners for them. It rather irritated her, however, to have them all insist that she was wonderfully lucky. That might be, of course, although for her part she was inclined to attribute her success to her own good judgment. At any rate, she was the darling of the gods, the sweetheart of chance.

Accordingly, being speedily and thoroughly inoculated with one of the subtlest and most powerful poisons of any era, Alberta went religiously to the races with Mr. Whittington. For a day or two her luck, her famous beginner's luck, held: then it turned and vanished so fast that her straining eyes could barely see its last receding wave on her

horizon.

Mrs. Whittington was too much occupied with bridge and the pretense of youthful gaiety to pay much heed to the girl. She contented herself by say-

ing to her other guests:

"Isn't Rudolf's little playmate a dear? They're both so interested in the horses, you know." And by patting Alberta's cheek when she chanced to meet her and querying carelessly:

"Having a good time, little one? Is Rudolf playing prettily? That's right."

But Alberta was too much of a child to entirely conceal her dejection, and Rudolf, noticing it, after a fashion endeavored to hearten her up a bit.

"It's just the fortunes of war, you know," he said encouragingly. "Tide's out to-day, be in to-morrow. Must take it game, you know. Nothing quite so disgustingly yellow as a bad loser.'

After this his little playmate felt that she would prefer to burn at the stake rather than express her real feelings; so, day by day, she donned the mask of light-hearted gaiety, and by night, within the screening walls of her own chamber, she cast it aside and allowed the face of youthful tragedy to gaze reproachfully at her from the mirror. To confide in her mother was, she felt, out of the question. That lady had a way of looking over her glasses with steel-hard eyes, and a singular aptitude, increased by careful cultivation, of making remarks that burned like vitriol.

She could tell Uncle Tim about it when she saw him, but she could not write; and as for Ernest, either telling or writing him was out of the ques-He had such high ideals, and wrote her letters twice a day in which he called her his "unsullied dove" and his "white rose of all the world." What would he say if he knew? She had not answered his letters for a week. She felt like a hypocrite whenever she endeavored to do so; consequently, she compromised by not writing at all.

In adopting this attitude, however, she failed to take Ernest Wakefield into

her reckonings.

One evening when all the bridgeplaying men and women had congregated inside, absorbed in their game, Alberta sat alone on one of the porches overlooking the sea, almost obscured in a fog as gray and dreary as her musings, and listening to the sad sigh of the waves as they washed the beach, when presently she heard a step behind her which caused her to jump to her feet. It was curiously, delightfully, alarmingly familiar, and filled her at once with a sense of joy and positive terror.

"Alberta!" Wakefield caught her hands in his and held them against his heart, gazing deeply, reproachfully into her eyes. "Alberta, a week of silence. my letters unanswered. Oh, Alberta,

what is it?"

The tension snapped. Alberta "I couldn't write, I couldn't. sobbed. It's been too dreadful to put into words."

"What!" He caught her tightly by the arm and looked squarely into her

face, his own paling. "What is it?

You must tell me, Alberta."

"Oh, it's too dreadful!" she moaned. "You will never want to speak to me again. Oh, Ernest, I've been playing the races, and I've lost every cent Uncle Tim gave me, and some money mother gave me, and she will ask me about it. She will insist on my accounting to her for every penny. Oh, what shall I do? I don't dare go home; and yet I'm going day after to-morrow. And the worst of it is, mother was right. Oh, Ernest, gambling is the most terrible of vices."

"A pretty kettle of fish," murmured Rudolf, who was sitting in his study behind the closed blinds, poring over his "dope" sheet, and could plainly hear every word. "A pretty kettle of fish. I had no idea of anything of this kind. Bertha shouldn't have allowed it," with

virtuous indignation.

Wakefield's voice came to him softly above the swish of the waves. "There, there, Alberta, don't cry so. I'll explain the whole thing to your mother. You have not been to blame. It is an outrage that such a thing should have happened. Never respect you again? Oh, bosh! I've done worse things myself. That's right, smile. Now you're my own Berta, and your eyes are like stars and your lips are like cherries and your hair is spun-gold again. Why, you were all eclipsed and faded out by grief, and now you are Berta once more. Oh, you are such a fairy, a quicksilver fairy!"

Behind the drawn blinds Rudolf clapped his hands to his worried and harassed brow, and that something which was almost a sparkle lighted his crocodile eyes. He stared fixedly before him for a moment or two, evidently dazed by his inspiration, and then

hastily returned to his "dope."

"And you are going home day after to-morrow," Ernest continued. "Well, I shall wait and go with you. I am stopping at the hotel here, and to-morrow I shall claim the greater part of your day. I have no intention of leaving you in this place."

True to his word, he remained and

did claim the greater part of Alberta's day, with the result that she smiled twice during the morning and almost laughed in the afternoon. At evening, when they sat on the sands watching the changing lights of the sunset, Rudolf came striding toward them. The something like a sparkle was quite apparent in his eyes as he sat down beside them and drew out his cigarette-case.

"Look here, Mr. Wakefield," he said, without preamble, "I happened to be in my den just off the porch when you and this little girl were talking last night; and your words, which I assure you I could not help overhearing, were a revelation to me. I don't blame you for your indignation. You must have thought that my little playmate here had been turned loose in a den of thieves; and I must confess that my wife, and perhaps myself, have been inconceivably careless. You see," with a slight, cynical smile, "so much real youth and innocence does not often come our way.

"Now, little Alberta," turning to her with a very kindly expression in his eyes, "I owe you a debt which it gives me great pleasure to pay, especially as the payment of it means that mother need never know." He twisted his mouth in a grim smile. Then his drawing, weary boredom vanished. For once Rudolf was alive to his finger-tips, alert

with enthusiasm.

"By Jove, Wakefield, it's the most remarkable thing that ever happened in all the world. I teil you it's positively overwhelming. As I mentioned, I overheard you talking to Alberta yesterday evening, and—and—well"—pulling his race-card from his pocket—"look here!" He indicated the pencil-scored book with a trembling forefinger.

"You said her eyes were like stars, you know. Well, I played 'Starlight' at ten to one. Her lips were like cherries. 'Cherries' at eleven to five. Her hair was spun-gold. 'Spun-gold' at six to two, and 'Quicksilver' at eight to one, and beat them all. Beat them all,

Wakefield!

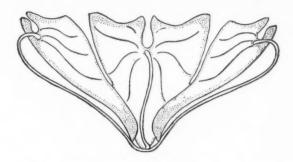
"And now, little playmate, half of it is yours." He opened a pocketbook

and began to rain bank-notes upon her, laughing like a schoolboy. Rudolf laughing like a schoolboy! Fancy! "Oh! Oh! Oh!" Alberta scooped

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" Alberta scooped up the fluttering green and yellow bills in her hands, "Oh! Oh!"

"You aren't going to accept them, are you, Berta?" asked Ernest in quizzical horror and yet with a real wonder in his tones. "You have informed me a dozen times to-day that gambling is the worst of all possible vices."

"Of course I'm going to accept them," catching them tight to her breast as if she feared he would snatch those paper certificates of power from her. "It's only fair. And gambling is the worst of the vices," lifting surprised eyes to his, the eyes of Eve, "only it's different when you win."



### THE GHOST-WHITE STARS

THE ghost-white stars,
So high, so strange,
Blink down through bars
Of straying cloud,
Whose torn waifs range
The dusky sky that bends, oppressed,
Over the earth's frost-rigid breast.

Sharp, ice-nipped blasts
Sweep from the sea,
Where toppling masts
O'er wrecked men, bowed
In agony,
Wait for the last, swift-mounting surge,
All in its inky swirl to merge.

But in their quest
From east to west,
From deep to deep
Of boundless space,
The white stars keep
Their proud, calm grace,
Nor heed our strife, nor need our rest,
Though touched to motion by the thrill
Of the same all-pervasive Will.

WILLIAM STRUTHERS.





O use his own words, Larry Dunnell was "flat broke." And now with as gloomy an expression as his sunshiny face could assume, his black head nodded emphat-

ically as, in a tone meant to be tragic but which in spite of himself held a cheerful note, he exclaimed:

"I'd jump at the chance to sell myself to the devil for twenty-seven hundred dollars—cash."

Then he laughed as if the idea of such a financial transaction had pleased him immensely.

For nearly a year, Larry had been editor and sole proprietor—in fact, the whole force—of the Bad Lands Civilizer, a twelve-by-sixteen sheet that he issued with as much regularity as the uncertain state of his finances permitted. And by virtue of that unexplainable characteristic of mankind, which causes it to accept as wisdom about everything that appears in print, Larry was regarded as a man of great genius and, on all subjects not relating to money, his influence was a dominating factor in shaping public opinion.

At this particular time Dunnell was fortunate enough to have on hand the paper required to supply his hundred and twenty-three subscribers and his two dozen exchanges. Seating himself and editorially elevating his heels, he bit off the end of a cigar, which was about the color of the ink that stained his slim hands.

"Ten days more in which to make the raise," he scowled. "I've tried just an even hundred times in the last three weeks to run a shoe-string into a bankroll, but the fickle goddess which presides over the faro-layout has whipsawed me, invariably, on the first turn of the cards. And at this exact tick I have on hand——" He rummaged his pockets and presently held up between forefinger and thumb two silver ten-cent pieces at which he stared fixedly for a moment; then a smile stole over his dark, clear-cut features, and flipping the coins on to the table he laughed:

"As there ain't quite enough of you to buy a white chip or a drink in Hell's Kitchen, I guess I'll save myself the labor of carrying you round any longer." But a moment later his slender fingers stole hesitatingly toward the despised silver. "I might be able to borrow the necessary nickel to make you come up to the minimum that's accepted in the Road to Hell for a white chip;" and," his tone was more speculative, "it is—possible to win enough on such a stake, if the turn comes right."

But as he touched the pieces he

pulled back his hand, exclaiming:

"There ain't one chance in twentyseven million for me to make the raise
that way, Kate! And though I'd willingly die for you I can't humiliate myself by trying to borrow five cents in a
camp where a quarter is the smallest
subdivision of the almighty dollar that's
exchangeable for anything but postagestamps. Another thing, my dear girl,"
smiling again, "if there's a soul on the
range that I haven't borrowed from to
the absolute and most remote limit,
within the last twenty days, it's because

I can't for the life of me think who it is."

Then he frowned fiercely and clutched an overhanging lock of his thick, black hair as if seeking to drag inspiration from his unresponsive brain. Unable thus to force an answer, a few seconds later he sprang to his feet and throwing away the remnant of his unlighted cigar, which he had nervously cut to pieces with his sharp, white teeth, he whistled.

"Oh, the devil!" And at this wholly irrelevant expression he smiled whimsically as if his feelings had been much relieved thereby. But presently his expressive face assumed its deepest possible gloom, and he went on in a melan-

choly tone:

"I don't blame you, dear, for believing that it is your duty to save your family from being stripped of everything; but it nearly drives me wild to think that, because of my being without any present means to take you out of pawn, you will in ten days from now be forced to marry—Tige Powers. Curse it!" exclaimed Larry angrily the next instant. "I swore I'd never admit the possibility of your becoming his wife; and, Kate," his soft voice was caressingly penitent, "I want you to forgive my momentary idiotic state of mind."

Then his face lighted and he began whistling bravely as if to convince himself that such a thing as Kate's marrying "Tige" was not even a remote possibility. Gradually his noisy, bolstering whistle subsided into a soft humming of some Irish nonsense about Kate's believing that if all her endearing young charms were to change by to-morrow she would still be adored. Lower and lower the tender protestations were breathed forth until, at last, he stood silently gazing at a great butte which towered high above the little hamlet that irregularly dotted a few acres of brown, sandy soil with its begrimed tents and baker's dozen of rough, unpainted frame buildings. Presently his far-away eyes dropped to the yellow, turbulent waters of a rapid river which, in the mild May sunlight, twisted like a flood of flashing gold around the little cattle-camp, as it hurried on its northward way.

"It's almost the color of your hair, to-day, Kate," he mused. "And the way it's running, a skiff would soon take me to you." Then he frowned. "But what's the use of my going unless I can carry with me the glad tidings of your redemption, which by all the legion of ancient gods I swear to accomplish."

And he again began to whistle courageously. Glancing at the advancing sun he remembered that he had work to do; and, scissors in hand, the mercurial but ever-optimistic Larry at once busied himself with his exchanges. After a few industrious minutes he noted his pile of "copy," then laid down a paper which he had just opened.

"I guess I've got enough specials for the *Civilizer*," he jested, "without using my Indiana correspondent."

But from force of habit he looked over the "ex" before consigning it to the office waste-box. Suddenly his nervous hands gripped the printed page. Rapidly he scanned the lines which riveted his attention. And the next instant without coat or hat, and paper in hand, he was running for the Road to Hell saloon as if his life depended upon his breaking all sprint records.

"Come in here, Red—quick," he gasped ten seconds later, dashing for the one private room. As the astonished proprietor strode after the excited man, a lounger remarked warningly:

"Better look out for a gun-play, for it's a sure thing the literary gent is clean locoed, and he's mighty shifty with that shootin'-iron of his'n."

Malone laughed good-naturedly, but as he closed the door his .45 was ostentatiously displayed in his big, hairy hand.

"What the deuce have you got that thing out for?" panted the amazed

"Well I guess I does look some belligerent," was the rather shamefaced answer. "But"—his blue eyes sparkled

a humorous defense—"when you knows a man is losin' out in love and agin' bank, too, and then he takes to rarin' round complete negligent in his attire, 'tain't safe to take no chances."

"Oh, shut up your josh and look at that," impatiently retorted the disheveled one, thrusting the paper into Red's

countless freckles.

"Look at what?" was the provoking inquiry, for the paragraph was heavily

blue-penciled.

"Oh, the devil! Can't you ever be serious a minute?" chafed the irate Larry, snatching away the sheet. "Listen!

"A woman, giving the name of Mrs. John H. Powers, was taken to the poor-farm last week from Cohoe Township. She claims the right to use this name under an alleged common-law marriage, which is a mere private agreement of the parties to live together as man and wife. It is now some ten years ago since 'Tige' Powers left the State for parts unknown. Rumor has it that he is at present located at some unknown point in the Northwest, and that he has become wealthy in the cattle business."

"There! What do you think of that?" exclaimed the editor, fixing his inky eyes expectantly upon the puckered lips of the stalwart Malone, who said in a tone of mock seriousness:

"I'm certain mighty sorry for the woman, Larry. And I'm sure glad you tumbles onto this, for while the range don't have the honor of the lady's acquaintance personal, still I feels confident it'll do the right thing, 'count of her bein' sort of left-handed related to sech a prominent gent. I'll chip in fifty, which I thinks is all you ought to ask me to donate to what you might say is practical a plumb stranger."

"Confound you!" flared the fuming

"Confound you!" flared the fuming editor. "Haven't you got such a thing as a sober hair in your head? You know I didn't come over here to raise

a subscription for her."

For a moment Red's great paw busied itself among his carroty locks, as if he were endeavoring to determine whether or not a thread of the variety mentioned was to be found in his tangle. Then he chuckled in affected surprise: "Well, the way you comes flyin' into my emporium sure looks like you has urgent business and, knowin' you for a excitable gent, I figures that you wants to raise a stake immediate so as to get it movin' her way on this evenin's stage."

"Stop fooling!" snapped Larry.
Malone's freckles hid themselves
momentarily in his deeply furrowed

forehead, then he said gravely:

"Well, to tell you the dead-level truth, I don't jest see what good this little piece of news is goin' to do her—or you either."

"Why, man, the woman claims to be Tige's wife; and you don't mean to tell me that this camp'll let him marry Kate till he shows he isn't married already."

came the excited reply.

"Course I ain't got no sech eddication as you has, Larry," answered Red slowly, "but I takes it that, usual, them that says a man is guilty has to prove it. Anyway, accordin' to the paper this female don't claim nothin' more'n bein' common-lawed to Tige, which kind of marryin's ain't regarded as sure enough splicin's in many comoonities. This camp can't do nothin' about it, anyhow," he went on decisively, "for it ain't got no court that has joorisdiction to settle whether a gent is hitched up regular and permanent or not. And, of course, 'fore the statoote judges would get through pawin' over the thing, Tige'd have the whole Rawlins tribe turned out to grass 'less Jeff's gal goes ahead and doubles up with him per schedule."

For some seconds Larry sat staring dejectedly at the man upon whom he had confidently relied to aid him. Red was chairman of what was commonly known as the "Committee," and he and a man now absent on a business trip practically directed and controlled the workings of that powerful body. And Dunnell knew that if Malone was against him it was useless to attempt to do anything with his fellows. But nothing in the world could long keep down Larry's confidence in the ultimate success of the scheme which he had

formed.

Finally his face cleared, and after a three hours' discussion he had so successfully convinced the chairman of the justice of his position that, over their last whisky, Red said with jocose grav-

"Larry, you has made her that clear and lucid that I holds that, construed liberal, the Committee has got joorisdiction to try any kind of a case that's presented proper, which I rules," his wink was most expressive, "has been done sufficient to call a meetin' forthwith. And it's mighty lucky, too, that Arizony's campin' in She-cawgo. I'll jest send a telegraph out on the stage tellin' him to trail down immediate and corral this female and head for camp under the whip, so as to be sure to get here by the day the splicin' is to come off. We got to be fair to Tige, though," observed the chairman judicially as he pushed aside his chair, "so I notifies him of the deal soon as I

gets a answer." An hour later, from his office, Larry saw Malone hand the message, which was to be wired from Dickinson, to the stage-driver, and the editor bubbled

softly:

"Everything's fair in this game, Tige, which you've proved to be your view by trying to get a wife via a chattel mortgage; but," he laughed merrily, "if I don't miss my guess, I'll check you by giving you one via the Commit-And, my friend, I don't believe that personally I shall have to make many more moves to do it.'

Then the hopeful but perhaps overconfident gamester again began humming his Irish nonsense about Kate's endearing young charms. But presently he abandoned his tuneful mouthings and engaged himself in the less romantic occupation of sorting "pi."

The Tuesday following, Larry stood in the door of the Road to Hell as the west-bound stage drew up to the plat-And the next minute Red handed him a small yellow sheet on

which was written:

Got her lassoed and am spurring for camp. Will pull in twelve o'clock Saturday. ARIZONA

"Which that gent is a prompt cuss," smiled Malone as he caught sight of the editor's dancing eye. "And," he went on, with a tantalizing grin, "seein' the proposed splicin' is set for four, we got plenty of margin to inquire proper into the claims of the comin' female, so if she's only four-flushin' it won't cause Tige no delay in gettin' hitched regular 'cordin' to schedule."

But at this bit of pleasantry Dunnell gritted his teeth and stalked away without condescending to bandy words with

his termentor.

"Funny," soliloquized Red, "how plumb onreasonable men git when they're locoed over a petticoat. They don't seem to have no sense of humor nor justice. Fact is," he laughed, "when we gets that microbe circulatin' in our system we ain't got no sense at all till it's nootralized by -a little time.' His broad face held its cynically goodhumored smile for some seconds when it suddenly disappeared, and he exclaimed:

"Hello! There's Tige now, so I'll jest notify him of the extry event that's been put on the program for Saturday.

Powers was a man of about forty; big, raw-boned and loosely joined together; with mouse-colored hair and a rather hard, weather-beaten face.

"You knows damn well, Red," he stormed a moment later, "that the Committee ain't got no right to stick its nose in a gent's private affairs; and I'm goin' to send to Bismarck for a lawyer and fight the deal to a finish."

"Well, seein' you're a old-timer," was the grinning answer, "I guess you knows bout how much figure a law-

sharp'll cut 'fore us.'

Malone's laugh was so provoking that Tige swore at him roundly, then flung himself into the saddle and gal-

loped away.

"He ain't sech a bad feller, after all," twinkled the brawny Irishman, his blue eves resting idly on the gray-white dust clouds which rose explosively from the heels of the flying pony. "And far as this woman business goes, I s'pose Tige never really figures that he's tied to her permanent, which mebbe ain't no good excuse, but, personal, I has to recognize that it's a exceptional gent that hain't made some mighty bad plays

in his games with females."

And with this unflattering observation on the duplicity of man in general,
Red relieved the lookout, who had been
on duty for some hours at the farotable. This game proved to be the
longest ever recorded in the Bad
Lands and was only brought to a close
a few minutes after noon the following Saturday, when Malone said in
rather sleepy but positive tones:

"'Cordin' to the notice which I gives

"'Cordin' to the notice which I gives Wednesday mornin' this'll be the last deal, as I sees that all the parties that's wanted 'fore the Committee is on hand

prompt for the hearin'."

Twenty minutes thereafter the chairman announced the opening of the peculiar trial over which he was to preside. Then he glanced inquiringly at

his eight fellow members.

"I guess we better percede same as we does in stealin' and unlawful killin's?" Authorized by the affirmative nods, he went on: "You knows the rule, Tige, applyin' to a gent who's bein' in-

vestigated."

And Powers, without a word, unbuckled his belt and placed in the chairman's outstretched hand a pair of plain but very businesslike .45's, that Red deposited on the faro-table behind which, with chairs tilted comfortably against the wall, he and his fellows were entrenched.

In front and at the left of the chairman sat Arizona, who, with the woman that drooped at his side, had arrived but half an hour before. Near at hand was golden-haired Kate Rawlins, whose amber eyes sparkled with hopeful excitement as her glance rested inquiringly on the tanned faces of the men whose decree would mean so much to her.

The silence following the customary precaution was profound, except as it was regularly broken by the staccato tick-tick of a "Standard Time" clock that grinned obliquely down upon the scene from its moorings behind the long, walnut-stained pine bar at the opposite end of the room.

But soon the involuntary shuffling of feet advised Malone that Hell's Kitchen, which spread itself out in its entirety before him, was growing restless at the delay. Red's big fingers tugged at his stubbly, sandy mustache as if he were wholly at a loss as how to proceed. Then his puzzled blue eyes turned helplessly to the half-laughing face of the man who was very largely responsible for his embarrassing predicament. But Larry merely winked satirically and shook his head so comically that it caused the floundering chairman to smile, and he at once recovered his composure, saying:

"This case is so entire pecool'er, gents, that I concedes I ain't posted exact on how to get her started proper. But I justifies sech mule ignorance"—he grinned his defense—"'count of its bein' the first time I ever sets in a 'attemptin' to commit bigermy' hearin'; and seein' Tige introduces a innovation on the Range in the shape of this Bismarck law-sharp," glancing maliciously at Larry, "I calls on said gent to air his ideas on how to get the ball a roll-

in'."

Every eye was now fastened on a smooth-faced, self-important-looking little man who sat whispering to Powers. The lawyer's shining bald head wrinkled flatly as he rose and said pompously:

"Amicus curia, I suggest:

"First: That, under the laws of the territory of Dakota, there is no such crime as 'Attempting to commit bigamy,' so there is nothing here for you gentlemen to try.

"Second-"

"Hold on, pardner!" interrupted the chairman. "You rings in some words which their meanin', as you uses 'em, ain't nowise plain to me. I ketches you as sayin': 'I'm a cuss koo-re.' 'Course I understands the first end all right, but when you splices on that 'koo-re' I admits you stalls me complete."

With a half-condescending smile the lawyer bowed slightly as if to explain. But his momentary hesitation proved disastrous, for the watchful Larry, knowing himself to be the only other man in the room who understood the words, saw a chance to enhance his reputation at the expense of the not overdiplomatic or astute attorney, and jumping to his feet he exclaimed:

"What his law-Latin means, boys, is, that as a friend of the court, he tells you there is no such crime as you've all taken the time from your business to inquire into. And I presume, sir," he went on in fine scorn, pointing his slender finger at the astonished lawyer, "that as the same kind of a friend you were about to inform this Committee that it had no jurisdiction over Tige Powers, who has hired you to pull the wool over its eyes and save him from being called to account for something much worse morally than rustling cattle or holding people up for their money. And-

"Pause a instant, Larry," the chairman broke in excitedly, "for I has somethin' to say to this law-sharp, who I notes with pride you is fully able to compete with in furrin terms and everyday American as she goes plain and undefiled on these feedin'-grounds." Then, glancing right and left at his associates,

he said:

"Gents, the thing looks so complete evident to me that I won't waste no time consultin' 'fore deliverin' our sen-

timents."

Picking up Tige's revolvers, he dangled them in the face of the now whitefaced attorney who shrank to his seat

as Red growled:

"I'm—a—cuss koo-re, I suggests, that these persuaders gives us joorisdiction on the Little Missouri; and I hands it to you final that when we gets together to try a man we has decided in advance that what it's claimed he's done is agin' the law moral of the Bad Lands, regardless of what statootes has to say about it; so, speakin' friendly, I p'ints out that sech a play as you makes in leadin' your first card is plumb disrespectful if 'tain't positive insultin'. And I'm—a—cussin' ag'in," grinned Malone, "I notifies you that contempt of this court is sure sooicidal."

Swinging the heavy pistols significantly, he dropped them on to the table, then glanced at his fellow members with an interrogative smile.

"Now that we has all the preliminaries settled satisfactory, I s'pose we better drive right on to the main trail so as to get out of harness quick as we can?"

"That's right, Red," yawned a blackwhiskered associate. "Crack the whip and let's get to movin', for I'm sure mighty nigh wore out and needs rapid action if I keeps awake durin' the hearin'."

The chairman straightened himself, and his widely humorous face assumed its most judicial expression as he

frowned.

"The only p'int left in the case is whether Tige did or didn't contract a splicin' with the lady settin' here that's sufficient bindin' to make him guilty of 'attemptin' to commit bigermy.' And seein' that the woman is more'n half sick over her troubles, I rules that it ain't nowise proper to make her tell her story personal. Arizony's plumb familiar with her hand, so I calls on him to spread the lady's cards for her. 'Course it's understood," added Malone, glancing at the much-discomfited attorney, "that if Tige dispootes the layout the female is here to personal back her play."

Mrs. Powers-as she called herselfwas a pale-faced but rather comely woman, and as the hearsay witness arose, her tired, gray eyes fastened themselves upon him as if her existence depended upon her hearing every syllable that fell from his lips. At the other end of the faro-table sat the attorney and his client, who now cast a sharp, inscrutable glance at the upturned face which, slightly flushed, did not suffer greatly in the mental comparison that Tige made, an instant later, as his gaze shifted to the more rosy cheeks of the girl he had hoped that day to marry. But now every glance turned to him who was to tell the story which they were all so eager to hear.

Although but slightly above medium height, Arizona was a man who invariably attracted instant attention the moment his voice was heard. A peculiar musical drawl greeted his hearers as he

began slowly:

You all knows that I believes in a square deal; and I wants Tige Powers to get it. That's why, boys, I refuses to take my place on the Committee, and asks Red to appoint another gent temporary in my place; for I concedes, flatfooted, that I'm that prejudiced in favor of the poor woman, who I brings up here to get her rights, that nothin' on earth could change my feelin's thereon. When I goes down to where she's livin' I'm certain unbiased and some skeptical; but while I knows Tige ain't no angel, still I never believes he's the kind of a gent that'd let a woman that he'd lived with as a wife be took to the poorhouse long as he had a white chip to stake her."

Pausing, the speaker's piercing black eyes lighted scornfully as he glanced at Powers, who shifted uneasily in his chair as though it was all he could do to restrain himself from at once taking up the cudgel in his own defense. Then, with a graceful wave of his long, narrow hand, Arizona went on more quick-

lv .

"But—after she tells me how, when she's only seventeen, Tige persuades her to go to livin' with him as his wife, which he does by claimin' that it's just the same as if they has a minister to splice 'em; and how, for three years, they lives that way open and notorious on his farm, till he sells out and decamps for parts unknown, I concludes to look into it personal. So I just hooks up and rides over into Cohoe Township where they lives former. And, boys, I investigates her story 'mong their old neighbors and finds that every word she tells me is the livin' truth."

Arizona paused again as if to give full dramatic effect to what was to follow. The relentless tick-tick of the clock as it measured the passing seconds formed themselves into words to Powers who now sat with half-closed eyes in a vain attempt to appear indif-

ferent.

"It's—so; it's—so," taunted the grinning clock-face above the bar. And when at last Arizona bent down and in the ticking silence whispered loudly: "Does you deny it, Tige?" Powers mechanically repeated the words which came to him from the measured swing of the pendulum:

"It's-so."

Then his face flushed, and on his feet he exclaimed:

"But I never knows she's starvin'. And when I pulls away from her I divides the bank-roll even. Don't I, Em?" appealing to the woman who now sat dabbing the tears from her eyes.

"Yes," she answered; "but you said, that soon as you got located you'd send for me; and—and," half-chokingly, "that's ten years ago to-day, and you never've sent me one word."

Facing about to the Committee, she held up a thin, blue-veined hand.

"Tige put that gold ring on my finger; and when I wore that I s'posed I was knowed to be married in sight of God and man; but"—she made a pitiful attempt to keep back her tears—"when I was sick and took to the county-house a lawyer told me mebbe I wasn't married—at—all."

And giving way to her feelings she began to cry, but she dried her tears when, a moment later, Red cleared his throat and said in a reassuring tone:

"It ain't no matter what that Injianny law-sharp tells you, Mrs. Powers, for you're in the Dakoty Bad Lands now which some calls 'rough and tough'; but by the Lord," his blue eyes flashing, "it's the place where if a woman don't get her rights complete it'll be 'cause every man on the Range is killed off a fightin' for 'em. Ain't that straight, gents?"

The answering affirmative roar clearly indicated that the chairman's question was understood to be addressed to

all his hearers.

In the hubbub which ensued Malone busied himself with the members of the Committee, and presently he waved his long arms as if he were attempting to turn a herd of stampeded cattle.

"Come to order, boys," he shouted. "We has agreed unanimous and I desires to announce our holdin'."

Instant silence followed this state-

ment, but before the chairman spoke the voice of Tige's attorney was heard.

"It is natural," said he, "for a man's sympathies to be aroused when he sees a woman in tears." His throaty tone was grandiloquently tolerant of the Committee's evident weakness. Then, with a self-confident flourish of his pudgy little hand, he went on pompously: "But, Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, you are surely not sitting here today as men—"

"The hell we ain't!" exploded the presiding officer. "What kind of animiles be we this afternoon 'cordin' to your notion?" he asked, with a sarcas-

tic grin.

"Judges, sir, judges," thundered the little man at the top of his small voice.

The absurdity of applying such a name to their fellow citizens affected the risibilities of the crowd, and there was a general laugh, but at whose expense was somewhat uncertain.

When the noisy ripple had subsided the unabashed speaker continued ora-

torically:

"Yes, sir, as judges; bound to give judgment according to law, regardless of sentiment or feeling. And——"

"Well, pardner," interrupted Malone again, "I guess you gets that statement some twisted; for we're the kind of jedges that's bound to give jedgment 'cordin' to our feelin's regardless of law."

At this unblushing declaration the flushed attorney saw that it was useless to continue and, after whispering to his client, he seated himself without further

remark

"I guess they ain't no use wastin' no more time 'bout this thing," the chairman said as he noted the attorney's surrender, "for it's plain that Tige common-lawed himself to this lady plenty bindin' for Dakoty; and while probable he ain't been figurin' sech to be the case, that don't let him out, for we all knows that ignorance of law ain't no excuse. It follers easy and natural that Tige's guilty of 'attemptin' to commit bigermy.' Customary, there ain't but one thing done when we finds a gent guilty of breakin' the rules of the

game as it's played on the Little Missouri. But we recognizes that this is a most pecool'er case, and we has decided to give Tige a chance to settle up this business fair and amicable, so as to save the usual hangin'."

A momentary pause followed, which enabled the attorney to whisper excited-

ly to his client:

"The chairman's joking, ain't he, when he talks about hanging you over

this thing?"

"I never knows of the Committee jokin' that way, and I sure don't intend takin' no chances," answered Powers. His adviser attempted to continue the conversation, but was met with an impatient: "You've finished your job, and I guess I know how to take care of this end of it without hearin' your opinion."

"Seein' that Tige ain't able to carry out his deal with Jeff's gal Kate, equitable she's entitled to damages for breach of promise," now continued the chairman. "And as we figures that her disapp'intment is about the size of the cutthroat mortgage which Tige has on her dad's outfit, we holds that friendly it's got to be turned over to her."

Then Red frowned thoughtfully as

he went on:

"But the other p'int is sure considerable puzzlin'. We don't want to lay down no rule which'll force a man to resume team relations with a female that may any time come prancin' on to the Range in pursuit of him; but we considers that where sech a round-up is made the gent should pervide ample for her keep in future; jest how much dependin' on the state of his bank-roll. Sech a matter is so plumb delicate and private that we hesitates to fix any figure in this case." Then addressing Powers directly: "So we suggests, Tige, that you and the lady takes a minute or two and see if you can agree on somethin' mutual satisfactory.

Powers hesitated for a few seconds,

then said:

"Does yer want to talk it over, Em?"

"It ain't money I come up here for,
Tige, though I needs it awful; and I
wouldn't 'a' budged a inch if I'd known

there was any chance of your gettin' hung 'count of my comin'," was her half-weeping answer. "I know I ain't so good-lookin' as I used to be," she went on, brushing away her tears but with a tremulous little catch in her voice, "but I thought if you saw how kind of poorly I was, mebbe you'd be sorry to let me live in the county-house and would keep me here with you." And dropping her face into her hands, she burst into tears.

At bottom there was considerable man left in Tige, and his face showed that it was now trying to assert itself. For several moments he stood indecisively watching the trembling form, then he stepped to her side and placed his strong, tanned hand on her brown

head.

"There! There! Em, stop cryin'," he said in a rough but kindly tone. Her sobs ceased almost instantly and he then addressed himself to the crowd

generally.

"Boys," said he, "I admits public that I ain't treated her right. And likewise that the play I makes to get Jeff's gal was dead wrong. But, fellers, I wants to say that I ain't nowise confident that legal, Em and me is proper tied up yet; anyhow, it don't hit me

that where you're only common-lawed that you're really married as much as where you're regular certified. So I guess to cinch the thing, Em," grasping the now smiling woman's hand, "we'd better trail over to the preacher's and git a piece of paper that they won't raise no question on if we happens to take a little trip back to Indianny."

As the storm of applause which greeted Tige's whole-hearted surrender was dying away Larry whispered to Kate, whose amber eyes still showed traces of sympathetic moisture; but they now danced with pleasurable excitement as she nodded her golden head at his words. Then the whisperer put his lips to Red's ear, and the Blackstone of the Bad Lands presently raised his hand for

silence as he laughed.

"What I jest hears—speakin' poetical—fills our cup of joy to the runnin' over p'int. For there'll be a double splicin' at the deacon's, prompt at four o'clock, 'stead of one as original scheduled. Everybody invited. And while the ladies is over to the Palace shinin' up their harness for this interestin' double event"—Malone glanced at Powers, who nodded understandingly—"drinks'll be served onlimited—at Tige's expense."



## THE HOUSE OF DREAM

COME, sweet, and share my House of Dream By Love's white-marged, untroubled sea, And every gliding hour will seem Part of a golden harmony!

Above, a stainless sky will gleam, Around, bland airs breathe languorously; Come, sweet, and share my House of Dream By Love's white-marged, untroubled sea!

Come, and forget the cares that teem;
From the world's toil and turmoil flee;
And we will taste the bliss supreme,
The highest joy life holds in fee!
Come, sweet, and share my House of Dream
By Love's white-marged, untroubled sea!
CLINTON SCOLLARD.

# WHEN HEAVEN TOUCHED THE EARTH BY June Warner



T was in the park on a foggy afternoon. That is, on what mere mundane folk would call a foggy afternoon. It might have been characterized by another name, how-

ever, according to one's mood.

How many of those who have spent some months, or all the months, of their lives in London, know the wonders of its parks on foggy afternoons—on foggy afternoons when the smothered day has wrestled long for breath and finally achieved some flashes of color and glory just before giving up the too hard struggle for another night's oblivion?

On such days, if one does know what may be found by venturing abroad the reward of the wanderer is great, A shift in the cloud-bank turns all the atmosphere to dull orange; and between banks of strange, impressionist green the Serpentine winds purple, and the trees in the distance appear touched by all of Titian's rarest shadings.

The ground beneath one's feet goes unseen, all the other realities that are hard and pitiless and necessary—so necessary—go unseen, too; buildings like barracks become Venetian palaces, with the low-floating clouds forming a brilliant oriflanume above their crenelations—once chimney-pots; fairy castles, picked out in fanciful reds and golden yellow, spring up from out the mist; bits of Park Lane, seen dancing fitfully on the horizon, suggest the Appian Way; the Marble Arch, with its imperfect columns and architrave half

blurred, is a thing to dream of ever after; and lastly, Bird-cage Walk upon a day of this kind begins in Paradise and ends in some better place which Moses forgot to mention.

It is all together enough to drive an artist wild, the wandering through such wreathed visions of that other world made real. Because, you see, the artist knows that this unknown London of delicate color, of splendid contrast, of mist-draped tower, and column fading into Elysian veils above—the artist knows that that's all real. Not a vision, but real. Not fog, but truth.

The London of black soot and beastly mud is but the poor material body of the mightiest Worker of them all; but this London of sunset splendor, this London of cloud-rent glory, this is the spirit and soul of the other, its helper and council, its life and its breath, and he who seizes and holds fast a single heart-throb of that same beauty does for the huge laboring monster of Realism just what a rose does for a sickroom, or a kiss of love for a tired home-comer.

Such an artist as that—one who worked unceasing to do nothing but that—was abroad in the fog on this particular day.

Graeme was a great artist, although still a comparatively young man. He was called "odd" and "original" by all who did not understand him, and infinitely loved by all who did.

Graeme was original in so far that he was earnest in his desire to give sight to the blind in more ways than one, but the picture way was the only way that he openly admitted trying.

His pictures were always revelations to people. When they read "The Albert Monument," as the name in the catalogue, they started with surprise and turned again to the canvas which was so full of fascination that any Englishman knew the atmosphere must be Brazilian-or even farther evoke shades of color such as that. But at the second look the looker recognized the truth of both scene and setting and wondered at his own previous blindness, and so after a while the painter's gospel began to bear some small fruit, and a good many set out to realize that on days and in places where there was "nothing to see," there was a good deal to see, some few even going farther and trying in good faith to see it.

Graeme-who was big in heart, stature, and outlook-took courage at this, and began to hope that after a long, long while perhaps they might learn from his lesson in trees and brooks some greater lessons, lessons applying to a collection of humanity even larger than that of the world's metropolis—even the lesson of the world itself; for this big, clean-hearted, generoussouled young man had done a lot of the kind of living which never shows at all except in the detached standpoint of him or her who, having eaten bitter bread and drunk brakish water with absolute faith in the future, comes to that future with soul so full of sympathy for all who do not know their lesson, that life seems all too short to give in trying to spread the glad news.

To be an artist was to Graeme the greatest thing on earth—next to being a man. To have risen from the place of one who should have been helped to that of one who could and did help others, was his greatest joy. To be in the world and of it, and to give to each day's relations all his head, heart, and hands, was his desire every hour. There was nothing ascetic or pedantic about him; he was, on the contrary, an especially healthy and human animal.

But the touchstone, which is the first of the supernatural rewards given here below, had come to him young, and once one has the touchstone to try each one and everything well, it's astonishing how once desirable possessions shrivel to naught, how precious certain simply-spoken words become, how trivial appear most of the world's edicts and standards.

Why, even the fact that he was to dine with Lady Elfleda that night didn't matter a pin to him. He didn't regard the invitation as any honor at all. He didn't care for formal dinners and would have declined this straightway only for a friend's importunities.

He hated to feel as he walked that he must keep watch of the time. Such a nuisance! He was far more interested in the drifting mist and the lesson which it preached to eyes and soul at once.

For there is no fog however thick that will not some day part, no chimney-pot which may not flash crimson against a floating banner of heaven's sending, no dull dark court into which some golden ray may not throw a wondrous opportunity to grow beyond.

Graeme was walking in Rotten Row. It was the nastiest of nasty days, but he was very happy, for he had on rough boots and so hadn't to pick his way. That he was going to dine at Lady Elfleda's that evening ought to have made for more happiness, too, for there were many reasons why dining at Lady Elfleda's should have filled any man with joy, Lady Elfleda being young, rich, beautiful, and tremendously hard to know.

But the fact that should have caused Graeme joy was other than that—it was that he had been asked to dine at her house without ever having met her at all, and such an invitation had never been issued by her to any one before. This fact had been impressed upon him, and occurred to him as he walked, but not as a matter of any especial moment.

"I suppose she has heard something about me that provoked her curiosity," he said to himself, still thinking less of the dinner-invitation than of the shifting gold and green values before him. "I hope I sha'n't disappoint her too much I—"

He got no further with the sentence, for he was interrupted there by a light touch on his arm, and turning, looked down into the face of a beggar, a young girl, scantily clad and drawing a thin buttonless jacket together across her chest with two hands that were cold and red.

His eyes saddened quickly as he scanned the face and figure. Misery is always heartrending to those who have hearts, and the girl was of a delicate build altogether unfitted to bear exposure.

"I'm cold and I'm hungry," said the girl, looking straight up into the eyes bent on her from so far above. "Oh, I'm so cold and I'm so hungry."

Stood still, be-Graeme stood still. cause he was so different from other men. Of course there are always cold and hungry people everywhere, and if one has always been warm and had enough to eat one remembers that all cold and hungry people are either lazy, or else impostors, or most likely both, and goes comfortably on. But the artist, without ever having been lazy or an impostor, had been fearfully cold and cruelly hungry again and again in certain Parisian and Munichean days gone by-and he had always stood still in the face of cold and hunger since.

The girl stood still, too, and faced him steadily, appearing to rival his scrutiny with her own.

His eyes ran over her in a way that was almost merciless, for he was a very keen observer; then he quickly and quietly turned into a path out of the beaten track—two senses—and led her with him. The fog closed behind them like a curtain at once, and they were as much alone together as if they had been in the middle of Hampstead Heath.

He stopped then and pulled off the overcoat with which he had effectually barred away the biting tooth of England's latter November.

"Put this on," he said. "Don't say a word now, put it on."

She almost jumped at the tone with which he addressed her, and looking at

him with a sort of wonder put the coat

"But you'll be cold," she murmured.
"I've been cold often and I haven't forgotten how it feels," he said shortly.
"Come, come with me now."

"Where?" she asked.

"Beyond the park. I know a quiet restaurant there. I want to buy you something to eat."

She stopped and hesitated slightly,

appearing to doubt him.

"Are you really going to take me there?" she asked finally, in surprise.

He put his hands upon her shoulders and turned her toward him. "Look here," he said, "you are a beggar—to most people; and I am a gentleman—to most people. I don't rule my life by the rules of anybody else, and you're no beggar to me. You're a cold, hungry girl, just as my own sister might have been if things had been different."

She looked up into his eyes again at that and he saw clearly that no fleck of London's dark side shaded their depths. "Take me where you will," she said simply. And looked down again.

It was just there that her voice and manner first struck him strangely. "You're no regular beggar," he said as they walked rapidly along. "You must have thought me very stupid not to have seen that at first. What are you really? Tell me all about yourself." He felt a surprising amount of interest as he waited for her answer, but she shook her head.

"How old are you?" he asked then.

She shook her head again. "Where do you live?"

She shook her head for the third

"You are silly," said Graeme. "Don't you see that perhaps I could help you in some way?"

She raised her eyes to his again at that, and again they looked at each other.

"You don't trust me," he exclaimed almost violently, perfectly conscious now that he had affair with mystery.

"I should like to ask you something first," she made answer.

"Ask me anything you like."

"If you learned to love me would you marry me?"

It was his turn to start.

"Love you!" he said to her in astonishment.

"Yes," she said, nodding composed-

ly, "just that."

The movement of her head was very quick and graceful, not to say coquettish; she looked up for his answer, and for a minute he was absolutely at a loss what to say. But then he bethought him.

"You've been on the stage," he said.
"I'm sure of it. You've lost your place and come on hard times. Isn't that it?"

She smiled. "No, that's not it at all. But you haven't answered my ques-

tion."

He glanced down sideways as they walked. He put her to his touchstone as he looked and she rang true. "The world would howl over my folly," he thought to himself, and then he spoke aloud: "I'll make short work of that question. Listen! If I loved a woman I'd pull her off of a mountain, or drag her out of a gutter, and then carry her to the altar in my arms. If I loved He never had formulated that idea before, having given very little thought to love, but somehow the statement in all its force seemed the only clear way of putting things at the minute.

He looked down at her again as he made it and saw a faint color cover her face. Her eyes were on the ground, and he noted for the first time how

beautiful her eyelashes were.

"Out of the gutter!" she repeated softly. "Would you, really?" She took her hands out of the pockets of his coat and folded them tightly together on her bosom. "And then to be carried to the altar in your arms, with her own arms around your neck, and her hands not cold as mine were a few minutes since, but warm—warm as they are now. Oh, that happy girl! Would you really treat her like that?"

He felt a sudden unknown madness leap through his veins. No, this girl was no beggar. Nor was she illiterate. Nor was she unworthy. On the contrary-

She put out her hand and just touched his arm.

"Let me sit down on a bench," she said, "just for a minute or two."

"Are you faint?" A quick anxious solicitude filled him.

"No. But I want to sit still and think for a minute."

"And think!"

She sat down on the nearest bench without further discussion, sank her chin in the fur collar of his coat, and was silent.

"I don't believe you're a beggar at

all," he said.

"Perhaps not, but I won't harm you

whatever I am."

She spoke quite low, and something drew him to sit down beside her, conscious now of interest unspeakable and

absorbing.

"I wonder if I am altogether human," she said after a long minute or two. "It takes hold of me like a vision. That girl, you know. I can seem to imagine her. She'll be some day. She's somewhere now-this minute. She'll live with you. She'll look to you for everything. She'll be everything to you. Dark, stormy nights she'll be safewith you. Bright, sunny days, she'll go out-with you. If you are ill she'll do for you. If she is ill the pain won't matter, except that you will be so sorry and that will make suffering half a joy. I tremble to think of that girl, just as I tremble when music pours out of a church door. She and the music are both wonders set apart from the world." She buried her face in her hands for a single second and then, lifting it up, "You haven't met her vet?" she questioned.

Graeme's lips were dry with quick breathing. To him the words that had just been spoken had brought revelation. They shook his spirit to its very

foundations.

"No," he said, almost painfully, "not to know her, anyway."

"Have you ever hunted for her?" she asked.

"Never." His breath drew hard.

"Do you think you'll ever find her?" Her voice dropped low.

"I don't know," he replied.

There was a silence, and then he suddenly exclaimed impetuously:

"I must see you again. When?"
She turned and rested her arm on the

back of the bench.
"Do I interest you?" she asked, and
there was the echo of a cry in the

four words.

"Can you doubt that?" Some bond of mutual comprehension seemed to him to be already riveted between them.

"I am not a young girl, although my dress is short," she told him then. "I'm almost twenty-six. I am really a woman. But I am not altogether bad. Not quite in the gutter." A sort of sad smile trembled about her lips as she spoke.

He could not take his eyes from her. "Why are you here begging in the park like this?" he asked. "Tell me all the story. Tell me! Tell me!"

"Shall I really tell you?"

"Yes. Tell me."

She looked at the ground. "I am a thief," she said then very calmly.

A single hideous shock ran through him, and then his knowledge, not of the world but of the world's God, came to his aid.

"Why do you lie to me like that?" he asked angrily. "Do you think I do

not know?"

"It is the truth," she said, with the graceful turn of her head—"quite the truth. I could have robbed you very easily before now. Believe me, I tell the truth. I have robbed enough men to know how."

He was still. It was one of those instants when eyes cannot see, when the

fog is impenetrable.

But in the instant after, the real fog parted and like enchantment a scene of glorious beauty disclosed itself to their eyes. She looked over the park and tears hung thick on hcr long lashes. He looked—and Truth revealed itself to him. The Truth that is Life and means Life Forever.

"If you say that you are a thief," he said very gently, "you say wrong. You

may have been one, but that is all over now. See here." She turned her wet eyes toward him, he put his hand into his pocket and took out his watch. "My name and address are engraved inside," he said. "Listen to me a minute. I want to show you that in calling yourself a thief you did yourself wrong. You cannot steal—you never will do so again. You see now what I believe of your story. Good-by."

Before she realized all his meaning he sprang away into the fog and was lost, leaving her there wearing his coat and with his gold watch in her hand.

### II.

It followed naturally that Graeme was late at the dinner, but he came so near not coming at all that his hostess would have been grateful had she known all. He wore his own overcoat to the house; it had been returned to his rooms within half an hour after he had returned himself. But the watch had not been returned with the coat.

Of course he had thought or could think of nothing but his strange adventure, and to him his own thoughts were so much more weighty than the silly social function to which he had come that it was a great relief when, Lady Elfleda having smiled a general pardon at his excuses, they all went down to dinner.

I cannot say whether Lady Elfleda was content or disappointed over her new acquisition. She was a beautiful and brilliant blonde, but Graeme sat away from her and she did not draw him out either directly or indirectly for her own benefit.

The dinner was a splendid affair from every standpoint known, but it was all lost on the artist. He knew as he bore his part that somehow some things in life were going to be over for him from now on, and that this kind of parties was one of them. The only break in the evening's boredom came when, after the ladies had gone upstairs, a man brought him a note which he took at once to the lights to read.

Let every one else go first. I want a word alone with you.

And signed below was a scrawl which Lady Elfleda had adopted years before at the Neuilly pension as her signature.

He did as he was bid naturally, although he couldn't understand, and then when the rest were gone, and Lady Elfleda's companion went into the next room, "to read," she said, they were left-these two, the artist with his preoccupation, and the society queen with what it might as well be confessed at once was her first love-affair. Lady Elfleda was a beautiful, self-willed young woman, who had declared for independence, and had not abused it when won. Hitherto it had been others who had loved her.

Graeme stood by the fire, wondering very much what under the sun she wanted of him, and it was not until she put the watch into his hands, murmuring as she did so, "Forgive me," that

he recognized her.

It almost unnerved him for a minute then

There are some men who can fancy his situation, I think.

She laid her bejeweled hands upon

"Forgive me," she murmured, contrite in the face of his genuine distress. "Oh, say that you forgive me?"

"Why should you ask that?" he said, his voice almost shaking as he spoke. "There is nothing to ask forgiveness

"Because I took chances," she said. "You took no chances," he said at

"I staked on you," she said, "and you might have failed."

"Never in any way that injures the poor or suffering, I hope," he replied.
"No, dear Lady Elfleda, all that isn't the question at all. If you were playing-just playing-a game for idle curiosity perhaps, then you were wrong; but if not that, why, nothing else matters."

"A game," she said, moving a little "Was I playing a game, I wonaway. "Was I playing a der. What do you think?"

"You know best about that," he said. "Don't you know at all?" Her smile

was very arch.

He shook his head slowly. mustn't say if I do," he said, trying to smile also. "I wish, though, that-but what does it matter now?'

She stood there before him. "Every-thing matters now," she said. "What do you wish? Tell me. Tell me as if -as if we were still in the park.'

"I'm afraid that you'll laugh at me. But it is that I might have fed you-

just once."

"Ah!" She turned away a little. "And you were cold?" he went on.

"Yes, very cold."

"I wish that I might have warmed you, too-just once."

She turned back then, and lifted up

her eyes to his once more.

"Perhaps I did do wrong," she said, "but, you see, I had heard so much about you and I wanted to know for myself. How could I know?"

"Do you feel that you learned much?" She sat down on a low brocaded chair and looked into the fire. "I looked into another world," she said after a little while. "I saw a great deal. More than you think, perhaps.'

Graeme crossed the room and drew a chair near, near enough to watch her

evelashes.

"I looked into heaven myself," he said, a sudden great courage pouring through his veins. "I have been mad since the coat came back, not for fear I had lost a trumpery watch, but for fear I had lost——" He stopped suddenly, rose from his chair, and began to walk up and down. "I must remember that it was five o'clock then," he said; "it's only eleven now. I'm not altogether sane, I believe, and had better go."

He paused as he spoke. Was he altogether insane either, he wondered.

She continued to look at the fire. He had stopped at the farther end of the room and looked back at her. If she had been so lovely in her beggar's garb in the park what was she now, in her silk dinner-gown, with the loose gold puffs all over her head, and her sweet face lit up by—by the firelight?

"They say that you are very unconventional," he said from the end of the room. "Tell me, is it so? Is that the

explanation?"

"Yes," she said, without stirring; "I should be living with any one of a dozen relatives, and I chose to live alone with Cousin Ellen. I ought to have married, too, but I chose to wait."

He came back to that near-by chair.

His courage was rising again.

"In the park," he said, "I told you so many things, and you told me nothing, except-

"Except what? I could tell you noth-

ing then, of course."

"But you told me one thing, and it was much."

"What was it?" She clasped her

hands tightly.

"How you fancied that you would put your arms-" He felt himself choked. Some things cannot be put into words twice. After a minute he went on:

"I cannot understand myself, but you understand me. That I feel. It over-

powers me-all of it.'

"I'll tell you," she said, still looking into the fire. "I went to the park so that I might learn to understand you. I thought that to learn to understand a man like you was worth risking many things.'

He pushed the chair quickly near, and took her hand in his. A te did so he saw two tears roll slowly gown her cheeks, and the sight unlocked his

tongue.

"Oh," he exclaimed passionately, "I am sorry, sorry that you are not the girl in the park. To-morrow I could have known that you were safe, warm, fed; I could have done everythingeverything for you. You would have been completely and entirely my own. You would have been everything to the one man to whom the things of this world count so little. You would have been my wife."

She turned toward him then, and quickly gave her other hand into his also. "What do you fear?" she asked. "Have you forgotten how you declared that you would drag her from the mountain quite as readily as from the gut-

He drew a great breath. And then he kissed the two hands, and laughed. "Fear?" he said. "Not for a minute. I only mean that the mountain is so

much farther to attain to.

"You shall not climb," she said, turning her face to his, "the world must climb to you. If I did not know within myself the possibility to stand worthily at your side, I should not have gone forth in disguise to the test to-day. I am altogether unworthy in some ways and I know-

"You talk nonsense," he interrupted. "But I shall learn," she interrupted

in her turn.

Somehow they found themselves to be standing up just there, and his arms went about her, and his lips found hers. Women kissing in a hurry or by a bad light sometimes aim badly, but there are kisses that never miss.

"Oh, I'm so happy!" she cried. "So happy! So, so happy!"

"Thief who stole from me in the park," he murmured, "and took all I had or ever shall have. You told the truth about your robberies."

"But I gave you myself," she mur-mured in reply, "and I want to tell you that you should be content. Whether from mountain or gutter, I am content." And for the third time he saw the arch smile and little gesture.

"You are from neither mountain nor gutter," he said softly, "rather from the clouds themselves. It was from the clouds that you came, you know, this day when heaven touched earth in the park."

"For us?" she asked.
"For me," he made reply first; then he added: "Yes, for us. For you, I hope, I pray, I believe; as far as in my power lies-I promise."





HERE is always the stage," said Angela, looking at me over the top of the business-directory.

"And there is always Aunt Prudence," I returned

promptly but expectantly.

"So there is!" sighed Angela. "And she would make no end of trouble about it." She closed the big red book and flung it on the table. "I've been all the way through it since I quarreled with auntie, and there doesn't seem to be any employment exactly suited to me."

"There's housekeeping," I suggested

hopefully.

"Housekeeping!" sniffed Angela scornfully. "What do I know about housekeeping? Do you think I look like a housekeeper?" she demanded.

I looked carefully over Angela's Paquin gown shining where its shimmering folds caught the flickering of the firelight, at her impatient little foot, shod in brocade, at the fairy laces around her silken ankles, before I looked at Angela herself. Angela with her flying hair that always looked blown back from her white forehead; Angela with her soft eyes and rose mouth.

"Not exactly like a housekeeper," I admitted when my inspection was ended, "but some one might be willing to take the risk. Some one, of course, who preferred beauty to beefsteak and rated charm of manner above the menu."

"Stop!" said Angela. "I asked you here to-night to help me decide an im-

portant question. So, Dick, please be serious."

"Serious!" I cried. "Can I be other than serious when we are discussing your life-work?"

I turned away, at her nod, to light a

cigarette over the lamp.

"Well, it's this way," continued Angela, picking up the thread of the conversation, and looking past me in an absent-minded way. "I have had another dreadful quarrel with Aunt Prudence, and I have decided that I cannot go on living in this house any longer, so"—she paused to give her words greater weight—"I want to earn my own living."

"Here!" I exclaimed, looking about the pale-tinted drawing-room, whose faint colors and hangings were gleaming like opals under the fire's spell.

"No. of course not here," said Angela: patiently. "I said I could not live any longer with Aunt Prudence."

Taking my silence for censure, she burst out angrily. "I don't care if she is my guardian, and my only living relative. I will not stand being treated like a slave, and watched and followed from morning until night, and when she begins to criticize my friends—" She stopped abruptly, but I caught her glance and rapidly reviewed the recent occasions when Aunt Prudence had been particularly chilly in her greetings.

"So," said Angela, leaving her sentence unfinished and sitting up straight in the big easy chair, "so I intend to earn my own living and live alone until I am twenty-five, and then poor dear papa's money will come to me, and I shall do exactly as I please forever afterward. Now the question is—in what

way can I earn my living in the next

two years?"

And evidently relieved to have unloaded this perplexing problem upon my shoulders, Angela sank back among her cushions and studied the tips of her pink fingers reflectively.

"We may as well start at the bottom of the ladder in search of employment," I began. "Now, the life of a scrubwoman, though not merry, offers—"

"Ridiculous!" interrupted Angela crossly. "Don't be foolish."

"There is," I continued blandly, "a wide scope for good plain cooks."

"Am I plain?" asked Angela innocently, with a distracting lift of one

eyebrow.

I half rose from my chair by the fire; but remembering that we were discussing an important question, I feared to follow my impulse and instead answered calmly: "Perhaps when it came to cooking you would be not only plain but positively elemental."

"Are you going to be serious?" re-

monstrated Angela.

"I am serious," I asserted. "The servant problem is always serious."

"Richard"—Angela's voice was exceedingly cool—"perhaps you had better go on to the club. Horace Caxton may drop in later in the evening, and I think I should come to some conclusion if I discussed the matter with him."

I settled back more firmly into my chair and braced my feet against the

fender.

"To be sure! I had forgotten Caxton. We will skip the intermediate steps of the ladder and arrive at the top—and Horace. He certainly presents a golden way out of this difficulty. Why not marry him, Angela?" I spoke lightly and tried to gaze indifferently into the fire.

There was a long silence, and I finally looked across at Angela with ques-

tioning eyes.

"I am considering—in fact, I have been considering Horace for some time."

Her voice sounded a little strained, so I talked on to relieve her evident embarrassment.

"Plenty of money, three houses," I checked off the advantages on my fingers, "a racing stable, yachts, good name, nice family." I stopped and looked at Angela.

"You've forgotten something," she

said.

"What is it?" I asked.

"The Mercedes," said Angela.

"The big Mercedes—no, I had not forgotten." And then I was silent, for I knew that to Angela this particular car, already known for its speed over two continents, was most precious of all the Caxton possessions. Had she not driven it, with Caxton beaming beside her, and could I ever forget the delight in her face as the huge monster of steel and brass responded to the touch of her little hands?

But Angela was waiting for me to

go on

"Well, then," I questioned, "with the Mercedes included, hasn't he everything under heaven that a girl could desire?"

I spoke bitterly because I had none of these things and had to pretend that they did not enter into my scheme of

life

"Everything!" echoed Angela—or was it a question she put to me? Suddenly she roused herself again. "But that wouldn't be earning my own living and I should like to try it, at least for two years."

"And then marry Caxton?" I asked

savagely.

"Perhaps," murmured Angela. After another long silence:

"There's decorative work," I suggested abruptly. "Lots of women go in for that sort of thing. You mix the paints, get the hangings woven, arrange the color scheme. It's a nice profession, too." I grew enthusiastic as I realized that in this field Caxton could not follow, for his ideas of art and decoration went no further than the painting of the Mercedes.

"It is a nice profession," agreed Angela thoughtfully. Then after a pause:

"There isn't much glory in it."

"Oh, if you're looking for glory!" I cried.
"Not exactly glory," corrected An-

gela, "appreciation is the word. Though any person who would call me in to do that sort of work in a house would never appreciate it when I had finished. And, anyway, rich people don't want homey homes; they want expensive homes. It's no fun planning the furnishings of a house when all the money you want is at your disposal; the fun begins when you try to do a lot and get a good effect with only a little. Now, I could do wonders with a small house and little money!"

Heavens, didn't I know that! As I looked back into my life it seemed as if my ways had always been made smooth by Angela. Her genius for home-making had followed me all my life. From the early time when she pinned posters all over my little room until my college days when she and my sister Elaine had made my rooms so comfortable that they were always crowded with ease-seeking friends.

And in later years when I set up a little bachelor apartment, Elaine had gone in despair to ask her help, and once again Angela had come to the rescue. And always the bills were laughably small and the results marvelous. Hopelessly extravagant and impractical as she was, I believe that, with five dollars to spend, Angela could make a freight-car cozy and comfortable. For at her touch the very spirit of home seemed to arise and linger forever. Then it was that some half-formed thought set me pacing the floor restlessly.

After all, money and the Mercedes seemed very essential when Angela came into the matter, and I had so little money and no Mercedes. And as I thought of the long low swiftness of that car, it seemed to suddenly become my evil demon, to be the great obstacle to all my desires, all my dreams.

"You see I want to begin in rather a humble way," Angela's soft voice followed me as I walked to and fro.

"How would dressmaking answer?" I demanded, stopping in front of her chair.

"Dressmaking would do-if the dresses were very simple. I should

never want to make a gown like this!" She glanced down her silken length. "But soft woolen dresses might be easy, or perhaps I might make muslin frocks. Muslin is so pretty, and so cheap. Do you think I should look well in muslin, Dick?"

I rapidly marched out of the way of temptation, for again Angela had lifted

that wicked little eyebrow.

"No!" I exploded. "No! You should wear silk and satin, velvet and chiffons and golden embroideries; walk on roseleaves and live on truffles and champagne; and ride in a Mercedes." I choked over the last words, but recovered quickly, for Angela's eyes were full of questions.

"Look well in muslin!" I shouted. "Yes—yes—you would be adorable, charming, wonderful. By all means wear muslin, and decorate a small flat. You are just the wife for a poor man!"

I laughed sarcastically as I flung this over my shoulder, but my heart was aching in a new and curious way, and even in my raving I knew that unexpectedly, unwillingly, I had touched the heart of the situation.

The room had become unbearably hot, and without waiting for Angela to reply I opened a window and stepped out into a little stone balcony. But even then I could not look up at the stars, the silvery night held no charm for me. Instead I looked back at Angela where she sat in the red glow of the fire. Angela—the most precious thing in the world and as unattainable as the very stars themselves.

"Always the desire of the moth for the star," I said under my breath,

looking at her.

And as I watched she began to smile and hummed a little tune to herself—swinging her foot in time.

"Heartless, heartless!" I groaned, and turned my face to the quiet darkness of

the street.

I heard the silken music of her gown as she came across the room to the open window, and I folded my arms tightly over my heart to quiet its beating.

"Dick," said Angela, her voice drop-

ping like honey into the darkness, "housekeeping in a small way might not be bad."

I did not answer. I felt as if I had traveled into the Valley of the Shadow since we had talked half in jest, half in earnest, before the fire.

"And in a very small flat living would be simple."

I knew that in a moment she would expect me to reply with some foolish gay remark, and my throat was contracted with pain.

"After all, cooking might be made pleasant and—muslin is very becoming to me." Her voice trailed off in a little laugh, or was it a sob?

And suddenly all the stars, all the silvery glory of the moonlit night fell around me in a shining radiance, for Angela's soft hand had crept through my folded arms and her cheek was pressed against my shoulder.

"It's Leap Year, I know," whispered Angela against my coat-sleeve, "but I think you might do the rest."



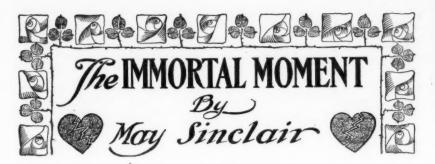
# OH, THE SUMMER

OH, the Summer! Glowing, blowing Flowers in the sun!
Oh, the warmth and sweetness, knowing That the Winter's done!
Spring is just behind us, dying, Autumn just before, and flying, Flying are the days—no sighing Can recall us one!

Oh, the Summer! The swift breaking
Of the early dawn—
Comes the sudden sun awaking
All it breathes upon!
Sweet the bob-o-link's clear calling,
Sweet, oh, sweet the lark's note falling
Through the blue, the day installing
With the rite of song!

Oh, the Summer! The long fading
Of the laggard light!
Crimson, gold and purple shading
Slowly into night—
Where the earth and sky are meeting
Day and dark exchange soft greeting.
Perfect moments! Fleeting, fleeting,
Sweetest in their flight!

ISABEL ECCLESTONE MACKAY.



CHAPTER I.



HEY came into the hotel dining-room like young persons making their first entry into life. They carried themselves with an air of subdued audacity, of innocent in-

quiry. When the great doors opened to them they stood still on the threshold, charmed, expectant. There was the magic of quest, of pure, unspoiled adventure, in their very efforts to catch the head waiter's eye. It was as if they called from its fantastic dwelling-place the attendant spirit of delight.

You could never have guessed how old they were. He, at thirty-five, had preserved by some miracle his alert and slender adolescence. In his brown, clean-shaven face, keen with pleasure, you saw the clear, serious eyes and the adorable smile of seventeen. She, at thirty, had kept the wide eyes and tender mouth of childhood. Her face had a child's immortal, spiritual appeal.

They were charming with each other. You might have taken them for bride and bridegroom, his absorption in her was so unimpaired. But their names in the visitors' book stood as Mr. Robert Lucy and Miss Jane Lucy. They were brother and sister. You gathered it from something absurdly alike in their faces, something profound and racial and enduring.

For they combined it all, the youth,

lopyright, 1908, by May Sinciair.

the abandonment, the innocence, with an indomitable distinction.

They made their way with easy, unembarrassed movements, and seated themselves at a table by an open window. They bent their brows together over the menu. The head waiter, who had flown at last to their high summons, made them his peculiar care, and they turned to him with the helplessness of children. He told them what things they would like, what things—he seemed to say—would be good for them. And when he went away with their order they looked at each other and laughed, softly and instantaneously.

They had done the right thing. They both said it at the same moment, smiling triumphantly into each other's face. Southbourne was exquisite in young June, at the dawn of its season. And the Cliff Hotel promised what they wanted, a gay seclusion, a refined publicity.

If you were grossly rich you went to the big Hotel Metropole, opposite. If you were a person of fastidious tastes and an attenuated income you felt the superior charm of the Cliff Hotel. The little house, the joy of its proprietor, was hidden in the privacy of its own beautiful grounds, having its back to the highroad and its face to the open sea. They had taken stock of it that morning with its clean walls, white as the cliff it stood on, its bay windows, its long green-roofed veranda, looking south, its sharp slated roofs and gables, all sheltered by the folding Downs.

They didn't know which of them had first suggested Southbourne. Probably they had both thought of it at the same moment, as they were thinking now. But it was she who had voted for the Cliff Hotel in preference to lodgings. She thought that in an hotel there would be more scope, more chance, don't you know, of things happening.

Jane was always on the lookout for things happening. He saw her now, with her happy eyes and her little tilted nose, sniffing the air, scanning the hori-

zon.

He knew Jane and her adventures well. They were purely, pathetically vicarious. Jane was the thrall of her own sympathy. So was he. At a hint she was off, and he after her, on wild paths of inference, on perilous oceans of conjecture. Only he moved more slowly; and he knew the end of it. He had seen, before now, her joyous leap to land, on shores of manifest disaster. He protested against that jumping to conclusions. He, for his part, took conclusions in his stride.

But Jane was always listening for a call from some foreign country of the soul. She was always entering surreptitiously into other people's feelings. They never caught her at it, never suspected her soft-footed, innocent intru-

sions

She was wondering now whether they would have to make friends with any of the visitors. She hoped not because that would spoil it, the adventure. People had a way of telling her their secrets, and Jane preferred not to be told. All she wanted was an inkling, a clue; the slenderer the better.

The guests, as yet assembled, were

not conspicuously interesting.

There was a clergyman dining gloomily at a table by himself. There was a gray group of middle-aged ladies next to him. There were Colonel Hankin and his wife. They had arrived with the Lucys in the hotel 'bus and their names were entered above Robert's in the visitors' book. They marked him with manifest approval as one of themselves, and they looked all pink perfection and silver-white propriety.

There was the old lady who did nothing but knit. She had arrived in a fly, knitting. She was knitting now, between the courses. When she caught sight of the Lucys she smiled at them over her knitting. They had found her, before dinner, with her feet entangled in a skein of worsted. Jane had shown tenderness in disentangling her.

It was almost as if they had made

friends already.

Jane's eyes roamed and lighted on a fat, wine-faced man. Lucy saw them. He teased her, challenged her. She didn't think, did she, she could do any-

thing with him?

No. Jane thought not. He wasn't interesting. There was nothing that you could take hold of, except that he seemed to be very fond of wine, poor old thing. But then, you had to be fond of something, and perhaps it was his only weakness. What did Robert think?

Robert did not hear her. He was bending forward, looking beyond her, across the room toward the great doors. They had swung open again, with a flash of their glass panels, to give pas-

sage to a lady.

She came slowly, with the irresistible motion of creatures that divide and trouble the medium in which they move. The white, painted wainscot behind her showed her small eager head, its waving rolls and crowning heights of hair, black as her gown. She had a sweet face, curiously foreshortened by a low forehead and the briefest of chins. It was white with the same whiteness as her neck, her shoulders, her arms; a whiteness pure and profound. This face she kept thrust a little forward, while her eyes looked round, steadily, deliberately, for the place where she desired to be. She carried on her arm a long tippet of brown fur. It slipped, and her effort to recover it brought her to a standstill.

The large white room, half empty at this season, gave her up bodily to what seemed to Lucy the intolerable impu-

dence of the public gaze.

She was followed by an older lady who had the air of making her way with difficulty and vexation through an unpleasantly crowded space. This lady was somewhat oddly attired in a white dress cut high with a Puritan intention, but otherwise indiscreetly youthful. She kept close to the tail of her companion's gown, and tracked its charming evolutions with an irritated eye. Her whole aspect was evidently a protest against the publicity she was compelled to share.

Lucy was not interested in her. He was watching the lady in black who was now standing in the middle of the room. Her elbow touched the shoulder of a young man on her left. The fur tippet slipped again and lay at the young man's feet. He picked it up, and as he handed it to her he stared into her face, and sleeked his little mustache above a furtive, objectionable smile. His companion—Jane's uninteresting man—roused from communion with the spirit of Veuve Cliquot, fixed on the lady a pair of bloodshot eyes in a brutal winedark face.

She stood there, strangely still, it seemed to Lucy, before the pitiless stare that went up, right and left, to her appealing face. She was looking, it seemed to him, for her refuge.

She moved forward. The colonel, pinker than ever in his perfection, lowered his eyes as she approached. She paused again in her progress beside the clergyman on her right. He looked severely at her as much as to say: "Madam, if you drop that thing in my neighborhood I shall not attempt to pick it up."

An obsequious waiter pointed out a table next to the middle-aged ladies. She shook her head at the middle-aged ladies. She turned in her course, and

her eyes met Lucy's.

He said something to his sister. Jane rose and changed her seat, thus clearing the way to a table that stood beside theirs, empty, secluded in the bay of the window.

The lady in black came swiftly, as if to the place of her desire. The glance that expressed her gratitude went from Lucy to Jane and from Jane to Lucy, and rested on him for a moment.

As the four grouped themselves at their respective tables, the lady in white, seated with her back to the window, commanded a front and side view of Jane. The lady in black sat facing Lucy.

She put her elbows on the table and turned her face—her profile was remarkably pretty—to her companion.

"Well," said she, "don't you want to sit here?"

"Oh," said the older woman, "what does it matter where we sit?"

She spoke in a small crowing voice, the voice, Lucy said to himself, of a rather terrible person. She shivered.

"Poor lamb, does it feel a draft down

its little back?'

The lady rose and put her fur tippet on the shivering shoulders. They shrank from her, and she drew it closer and fastened it with caressing and cajoling fingers. There was about her something impetuous and perverse, a wilful, ungovernable tenderness. Her hands had the swiftness of things moved by sweet disastrous impulses.

The white person—she was quite terrible—undid the fastening and shook her shoulders free of the fur. It slid to the floor for the third time.

Lucy rose from his place, picked up the fur and restored it to its owner.

The quite terrible person flushed with vexation.

"You see," said the lady, "the trouble you've given that nice man."

"Oh, don't, he'll hear you."

"If he does he won't mind," said the lady.

He did hear her. It was difficult not to hear, not to look at her, not to be interested in every movement that she made. Her charm, however, was powerless over her companion.

Their voices, to Lucy's relief, sank low. Then suddenly the companion

spoke.

"Of course," said she, "if you want all the men to look at you—"

Lucy looked no more. He heard the lady draw in her breath with a soft sharp sound, and he felt his blood running scarlet to the roots of his hair.

"I believe"—the older lady spoke al-

most vindictively-"you like it.

The head waiter, opportune in all his approaches, brought coffee at that moment. Lucy turned his chair slightly, so that he presented his back to the speaker, and to the lady in black his side-face, shaded by his hand, conspicu-

ously penitential.

Jane tried to set everybody at their ease by talking in a clear, cool voice about the beautiful decorations, the perfect management of the hotel. The two drank their coffee hastily and left the table. In the doorway Lucy drew the head waiter aside.

"Who," said he, "is that lady in the window?"

"The lady in the window, sir? Miss Keating, sir.

"I mean-the other lady."

The head waiter looked reproachfully at Lucy and apologetically at Jane. "The lady in black, sir? You want

to know her name?"

"Yes."

"Her name, sir, is Mrs. Tailleur."

His manner intimated respectfully that Lucy would not like Mrs. Tailleur, and that, if he did, she would not be good for him.

The brother and sister went out into the hotel garden. They strolled up and down the cool green lawns that over-

hung the beach.

Lucy smoked and was silent.

"Jane," he said presently, "could you see what she did?"

"I was just going," said Jane, "to ask you that."

"Upon my soul, I can't see it," said

"Nor I," said Jane.

"Could you see what I did?"

"What you did?"

"Yes, I. Did I look at her?"

"Well, yes, certainly-you looked at

"And you think she minded?"

"No. I don't think she minded very

"Come-she couldn't have liked it,

could she?"

"I don't know. I don't think she noticed it. You see"-Jane was off on the adventure-"she's in mourning for her husband. He has been dead about two years. He wasn't very kind to her, and she doesn't know whether to be glad or sorry he's dead. She's unhappy, and afraid."

"I say, how do you know all that?" "I know," said Jane, "because I see it in her face. And in her clothes. I al-

ways see things." He laughed at that.

# CHAPTER II.

They talked a long time as they paced the green lawns, linked arm in arm, keeping their own path fastidiously.
Miss Keating, Mrs. Tailleur's com-

panion, watched them from her seat on

the veranda.

She had made her escape from the great lighted lounge behind her where the men were sitting. She had found a corner out of sight of its wide windows. She knew that Kitty Tailleur was in there, somewhere. She could hear her talking to the men. At the other end of the veranda the old lady sat with her knitting. From time to time she looked up over her needles and glanced curiously at Miss Keating.

On the lawn below Colonel Hankin walked with his wife. They kept the same line as the Lucys, so that, in rhythmic instants, the couples made one group. There was an affinity, a harmony in their movements as they approached each other. They were all obviously nice people, people who belonged by right to the same group, who might approach each other without any

impropriety.

Miss Keating wondered how long it would be before Kitty Tailleur would approach Mr. Lucy. That afternoon, on her arrival, she had approached the colonel, and the colonel had got up and gone away. Kitty had then laughed. Miss Keating suspected her of a similar social intention with regard to the She knew his name. younger man. She had looked it up in the visitors' book. She was always looking up people's names. She had made with determination for the table next to him.

Miss Keating, in the dawn of their acquaintance, had prayed that Mrs. Tailleur might not elect to sit next any one who was not nice. Latterly, she had found herself hoping that their place might not be in view of anybody who

For three months they had been living in hotels, in horrifying publicity. Miss Keating dreaded most the hour they had just passed through. There was something terrible to her in their entry, in their passage down the great white, palm-shaded, exotic room, their threading of the ways between the tables, with all the men turning round to

well for Kitty to pretend that she saved her by thus diverting and holding fast the public eye. Miss Keating felt that the tail of it flicked her unpleasantly as

stare at Kitty Tailleur. It was all very

she followed in that troubled, luminous wake.

It had not been quite so unbearable in Brighton, at Easter, when the big hotels were crowded, and Mrs. Tailleur was not so indomitably conspicuous. Or else Miss Keating had not been so painfully alive to her. But Southbourne was half empty in early June, and the Cliff Hotel, small as it was, had room for the perfect exhibition of Mrs. Tailleur. It gave her wide polished spaces, and clean brilliant backgrounds, yards of parqueterie for the gliding of her feet, and monstrous mirrors for reflecting her face at unexpected angles. These distances fined her grace still finer, and lent her a certain pathos, the charm of figures vanishing and remote.

Not that you could think of Kitty Tailleur as in the least remote or vanishing. She seemed to be always approaching, to hover imminently and

dangerously near.

Mr. Lucy looked fairly unapproachable. His niceness, Miss Keating imagined, would keep him linked arm in arm with his sister, maintaining, unconsciously, inoffensively, his distance and distinction. He would manage better than the colonel. He wouldn't have to get up and go away. So Miss Keating thought.

From the lounge, behind the veranda,

Kitty's voice came to her again. Kitty was excited and her voice went winged. It flew upward, touched a perilous height and shook there. It hung, on its delicate feminine wings, dominating the male voices that contended brutally below. Now and then it found its lyric mate, a high adolescent voice that followed it with frenzy, that broke pitifully, in sharp abominable laughter, like a cry of pain.

Miss Keating shut her eyes to keep out her vision of Kitty's face with the look it wore when her voice went high.

She was roused by the waiter bringing coffee. Kitty Tailleur had come out on to the veranda. She was pouring out Grace Keating's coffee and talking to her in another voice, the one that she kept for children and for animals and for all diminutive and helpless things. She was saying that Miss Keating, whom she called Bunny, was a dear little white rabbit and she wanted to stroke her.

"You see, you are so very small," said Kitty, as she dropped sugar into Miss Keating's cup. She had ordered cigarettes and a liqueur for herself,

Miss Keating said nothing. She drank her coffee with a distasteful

movement of her lips.

Kitty Tailleur stretched herself at full length on a garden chair. She watched her companion with eyes secretly, profoundly intent under lowered lids.

"Do you mind my smoking?" she said

presently.

"No," said Miss Keating.

"Do you mind my drinking Kümmel?"

"No."

"Do you mind my showing seven inches of stocking?"

"No."

"What do you mind then?"

"I mind your making yourself so very conspicuous."

"I don't make myself conspicuous. I

was born so."

"You make me conspicuous. Goodness knows what all these people take us for."

"Holy Innocent, as long as you sit

tight and do your hair like that, nobody could take you for anything but a dear little bunny with its ears laid back. But if you get palpitations in your little nose, and turn up your little white tail at people, and scuttle away when they look at you, you can't blame them if they wonder what's the matter with you."

"With me?"

"Yes. It's you who give the show away." Kitty smiled into her liqueur glass. "It doesn't seem to strike you that your behavior compromises me."

Miss Keating's mouth twitched. Her narrow, rather prominent front teeth lifted an instant, and then closed sharply on her lower lip. Her throat trembled as if she were swallowing some bitter thing that had been on the tip of her tongue,

"If you think that," she said and her voice crowed no longer, "wouldn't it be better for us not to be together?"

Kitty shook her meditative head. "Poor Bunny," said she, "why can't you be honest? Why don't you say plump out that you're sick and tired of me? I should be. I couldn't stand another woman lugging me about as I lug you."

"It isn't that. Only—everywhere we go—there's always some horrible man."
"Everywhere you go, dear lamb, there

always will be."

"Yes. But one doesn't have anything to do with them."

"I don't have anything to do with them."

"You talk to them."

"Of course I do," said Kitty. "Why

"You don't know them."

"H'm. If you never talk to people you don't know, pray, how do you get to know them?"

Kitty sat up and began playing with the matches till she held a bunch of them blazing in her hand. She was blowing out the flame as the Hankins came up the steps of the veranda. They had a smile for the old lady in her corner, and for Miss Keating a look of wonder and chriosity and pity; but they turned from Mrs. Tailleur with guarded eyes. "What do you bet," said Kitty, "that I don't make that long man there come and talk to me."

"If you do-"

"I'll do it before you count ten. One, two, three, four—I shall ask him for a light——"

"Sh-sh! He's coming."

Kitty slid her feet to the floor and covered them with her skirt. Then she looked down, fascinated, apparently, by the shining tips of her shoes. You could have drawn a straight line from her feet to the feet of the man coming up the lawn.

"Five, six, seven—" Kitty lit her last match. "T—t! The jamfounded

thing's gone out."

The long man's sister came up the steps of the veranda. The long man followed her, slowly, with deliberate pauses in his stride.

"Eight, nine," said Kitty under her

breath. She waited.

The man's eyes had been upon her; but in the approach he lowered them; and as he passed her he turned away his head.

"It's no use," said Miss Keating.

"You can't have it both ways."

Kitty was silent.

Suddenly she laughed. "Bunny," said she, "would you like to marry the long man?"

Miss Keating's mouth closed tightly, with an effort, covering her teeth.

Kitty leaned forward. "Perhaps you can if you want to. Long men sometimes go crazy about little women. And you'd have such dear little long babies -little babies with long faces-why You're just the right size for him. He could make a memorandum of you and put you in his pocket; or you could hang on his arm like a dear little umbrella. It would be all right. You may take it from me that man is entirely moral. He wouldn't think of going out without his umbrella. And he'd be so nice when the little umbrellas came—Dear Bunny, face massage would do wonders for you-Why ever not? He's heaps nicer than that man at the Hydro, and you'd have married. him, you know you would, if I hadn't told you he was a commercial traveler. Never mind, ducky. I dare say he wasn't."

Kitty curled herself up tight on the long chair and smiled dreamily at Miss

Keating.

"Do you remember the way you used to talk at Matlock, just after I found you there? You were such a rum little thing. You said it would be very much better if we hadn't any bodies, so that people could fall in love in a prettier way and only be married spiritually. You said God ought to have arranged things on that footing. You looked so miserable when you said it. By the way, I wouldn't go about saying that sort of thing to people. That's how I spotted you. I know men think it's one of the signs."

"Signs of what?"

"Of that state of mind. When a woman comes to me, and talks about being spiritual, I always know she isn't -at the moment. You asked me, Bunny—the second time I met you—if I believed in spiritual love, and all that. I didn't and I don't. When you're gone on a man, all you want is to get him, and keep him to yourself. I dare say it feels jolly spiritual-especially when you're not sure of the man-but it isn't. If you're gone on him enough to give him up when you've got him, there might be some spirituality in that. I shall believe in it when I see it done."

"Seriously," she continued, "if you'd been married, Bunny, you wouldn't have had half such a beastly time. You're one of those leaning, clinging little women who require a strong, safe man to support them. You ought to be mar-

ried."

Miss Keating smiled a little sad spiritual smile and said that was the last thing she wanted.

"Well," said Kitty. "I didn't say it

was the first."

Kitty's smile was neither sad nor spiritual. She uncurled herself, got up, and stood over her companion, stroking her sleek thin hair.

Miss Keating purred under the caress. She held up her hand to Kitty

who took it and gave it a squeeze before she let it go.

"Poor Bunny! Nice Bunny!" she said as if Miss Keating were an animal. She stretched out her arms, turned, and disappeared through the lounge into the billiard-room.

## · CHAPTER III.

It could not be denied that Kitty had a charm. Miss Keating was not denying it, even now, when she was saying to herself that Kitty had a way of attracting very disagreeable attention.

At first she had supposed that this was an effect of Kitty's charm, disagreeable to Kitty. Then, even in the beginning, she had seen that there was something deliberate and perpetual in Kitty's challenge of the public eye. The public eye, so far from pursuing Kitty, was itself pursued, tracked down and captured. Kitty couldn't let it go. Publicity was what Kitty coveted.

She had then supposed that Kitty was used to it; that she was, in some mysterious way, a personage. There would be temptations, she had imagined, for any one who had a charm that lived

thus in the public eve.

And Kitty had her good points, too. There was nobody so easy to live with as Kitty in her private capacity, if she could be said to have one. She never wanted to be amused, or read to, or sat up with late at night, like the opulent invalids Miss Keating had been with hitherto. Miss Keating owed everything she had to Kitty, her health-she was constitutionally anemic-her magnificent salary, the luxurious gaiety in which they lived and moved-moved, perhaps, rather more than lived. The very combs in her hair were Kitty's. So were the gowns she wore on occasions of splendor and display. It struck her as odd that they were all public, these occasions, things they paid to go to.

It had dawned on her by this time, coldly, disagreeably, that Kitty Tailleur was nobody—nobody, that is to say, in particular. A person of no account in the places where they had stayed. In their three months' wanderings they had

never been invited to any private house. Miss Keating could not account for that air of ill-defined celebrity that hung round Kitty like a scent, and marked her trail.

Not that any social slur seemed to attach to Kitty. The acquaintances she had made in her brief and curious fashion were all, or nearly all, socially immaculate. The friends—they were all men—who came to her of their own intimate accord, belonged, some of them, to an aristocracy higher than that represented by Mr. Lucy or the colonel. And they had been by no means impervious to Kitty's charm.

From the sounds that came from the billiard-room she gathered that Kitty's charm appealed also to her audience in there. Leaning her body forward so as to listen, Miss Keating became aware that Lucy had returned to the lounge and was strolling about in it, as if he were looking for somebody. He strolled into the veranda.

The garden was dark now, but a little light fell on the veranda from the open windows of the lounge. Lucy looked at Mrs. Tailleur's empty chair. He was about to sit in it when he saw that he was alone with Mrs. Tailleur's companion. He rose again for flight. Miss Keating rose also with the same intention.

Lucy protested. "Please don't let me disturb you. I am not going to sit here."

"But I am driving you in."

"Not at all. I only thought you might object to my smoking."

"But I don't object."
"You don't, really?"

"If I stay," said she, "will that prove it?"

"Please do," said Lucy.

Miss Keating pushed her chair as far as possible from his. She seated herself with a fugitive, sidelong movement; as much as to say she left him to the sanctuary he sought. He would please to observe the perfection of her withdrawal. The table with the matchstand on it stood between them.

Lucy approached the match-stand

tentatively. Miss Keating, averted and effaced, was yet aware of him.

"I'm afraid there are no matches," said she. "Mrs. Tailleur has used them all." So effaced and so averted was Miss Keating that there was nothing left of her but a sweet, attenuated, disembodied voice. It was as if spirit spoke to spirit with the consecrated doors between.

Lucy smiled. He paused at Mrs. Tailleur's chair.

"Is your friend coming back again?" he asked.

"I don't think so."

It might have been an effect of her remoteness, but Miss Keating's tone conveyed to him ever so slight a repudiation of Mrs. Tailleur.

He seated himself. As he did so, he searched his coat-pockets. There were no matches there. He knew he would find some in the lounge. Perhaps he might find Mrs. Tailleur also. He would get up and look.

Miss Keating, still disembodied, rose and withdrew herself completely, and Lucy thought better of his intention. He lay back and closed his eyes.

A light tap on the table roused him. It was Miss Keating laying down a match-box. He saw her hand poised yet in the delicacy of its imperceptible approach.

He stared, stupefied with embarrassment. He stuttered with it. "Really—I—I wish you hadn't." He did not take up the match-box all at once, lest he should seem prompt in accepting this rather extraordinary service.

Mrs. Tailleur's companion slid back into her seat and sat there smiling to herself and to the incommunicative night.

"I hope," she said presently, "you are not refraining from smoking because of me."

She was very sweet and soft and gentle. But she had not struck him as gentle or soft or sweet when he had seen her with Mrs. Tailleur, and he was not prepared to take that view of her now.

"Thank you," he said. He couldn't think of anything else to say. He lit

his cigarette and smoked in an innocent abstraction.

A clock indoors struck ten. Miss Keating accounted for her continuance. "It is the only quiet place in the hotel," said she.

He assented, wondering if this were meant for a conversational opening.

"And the night air is so very sweet and pure."

"I'm afraid you find this smoke of

mine anything but——"
"If you are so serious about it," said she, "I shall be afraid either to stay out

or to go in."

If there were any opening there he missed it. He had turned at the sound of a skirt trailing, and he saw that Mrs. Tailleur had come back into the lounge. He was thoughtful for a moment. Then he got up quietly and went in.

He did not speak to her or look at her. He sat very still in a corner of the room where he could see her reflection in a big mirror. It did not occur to him that Mrs. Tailleur could see his,

Outside, in the veranda, Miss Keating sat shuddering in the night air.

#### CHAPTER IV.

Lucy's mind was like his body. Superficial people called it narrow because the sheer length of it diverted their attention from its breadth. Visionary, yet eager for the sound impact of the visible, it was never more alert than when it, so to speak, sat still, absorbed in its impressions. It was the sport of young and rapid impulses, which it seemed to obey sluggishly, while, all the time, it moved with immense slow strides to incredibly far conclusions. Having reached a conclusion it was apt to stay there. The very length of its stride made turning awkward for it.

He had reached a conclusion now, on his third night in Southbourne. He must do something, he did not yet know what, for the protection of Mrs. Tail-

leur.

Her face was an appeal to the chivalry that sat quiet in Lucy's heart, nursing young dreams of opportunity.

Lucy's chivalry had been formed by three weeks of courtship and three years of wedded incompatibility. The incompatibility had hardly dawned on him when his wife died. Three years were too short a space for Lucy's mind to turn in; and so he always thought of her tenderly as dear little Amy. She had given him two daughters and paid

for the younger with her life.

Five years of fatherhood finished his training in the school of chivalry. He had been profoundly moved by little Amy's sacrifice to the powers of life, and he was further touched by the heartrending spectacle of Jane. Jane doing all she knew for him; Jane so engaging in her innocence, hiding her small childlike charm under dark airs of assumed maternity; Jane, whose skirts fluttered wide to all the winds of dream; Jane with an apron on and two little girls tied to the strings of it; Jane, adorable in disaster, striving to be discreet and comfortable and competent.

He had a passionate pity for all creatures troubled and unfortunate. And Mrs. Tailleur's face called aloud to him for pity. For Lucy Mrs. Tailleur's face wore, like a veil, the shadow of the incredible past and of the future; it was reminiscent and prophetic of terrible and tragic things. Across the great spaces of the public rooms his gaze answered her call. Then Mrs. Tailleur's face would become dumb. Like all hurt things, she was manifestly shy of observation and pursuit.

Pursuit and observation, perpetual, implacable, were what she had to bear. The women had driven her from the drawing-room; the men made the smoke-room impossible. A cold wet mist came with the evenings. It lay over the sea and drenched the lawns of the hotel garden. Mrs. Tailleur had

no refuge but the lounge.

To-night the wine-faced man and his companion had tracked her there. Mrs. Tailleur had removed herself from the corner where they had hemmed her in. She had found an unoccupied sofa near the writing-table. The pursuer was seized, instantly, with a desire to write letters. Mrs. Tailleur went out and

shivered on the veranda. His eyes followed her. In passing she had turned her back on the screened hearth-place where Lucy and his sister sat alone.

"Did you see that?" said Lucy. "I did indeed," said Jane.

"It's awful that a woman should be exposed to that sort of thing. What can her people be thinking of?"

"Her people?"

"Yes. To let her go about alone."
"I go about alone," said Jane pensively.

"Yes. But she's so good-looking."

"Am I not?"

"You're all right, Jenny. But you never looked like that. There's something about her——"

"Is that what makes those men horrid

to her?"

"Yes, I suppose so. The brutes!" He paused irritably. "It mustn't happen again."

"What's the poor lady to do?" said

lane.

"She can't do anything. We must."

"We---"

"I must. You must. Go out to her, Janey, and be nice to her."
"No. You go and say I sent you."

He strode out on to the veranda. Mrs. Tailleur sat with her hands in her lap, motionless, and, to his senses, unaware.

"Mrs. Tailleur-"

She started and looked up at him. "My sister asked me to tell you that there's a seat for you in there, if you don't mind sitting with us."

"But-won't you mind me?"

"Not—not," said Lucy—he positively stammered—"not if you don't mind us."

Mrs. Tailleur looked at him again, wide-eyed, with the strange and pitiful candor of distrust. Then she smiled,

incomprehensibly.

Her eyelids dropped as she slid past him to the seat beside Jane. He noticed that she had the sudden, furtive ways of the wild thing aware of the hunter.

"May I, really?" said Mrs. Tailleur. "Oh, please," said Jane.

As she spoke, the man at the writing-

table looked up and stared. Not at Mrs. Tailleur, this time, but at Jane. He stared with a wonder so spontaneous, so supreme, that it purged him of offense.

He stared again—with less innocence—at Lucy as the young man gave way, reverently, to the sweep of Mrs. Tailleur's gown. Lucy's face intimated to him that he had made a bad mistake, The wretch admitted, by a violent flush, that it was possible. Then his eyes turned again to Mrs. Tailleur. It was as much as to say he had only been relying on the incorruptible evidence of his senses.

Mrs. Tailleur sat down and breathed

hard

"How sweet of you." Her voice rang with the labor of her breast.

Lucy smiled as he caught the word. He would have condemned the stress of it, but that Mrs. Tailleur's voice pleaded forgiveness for any word she chose to utter. "Even," he said to himself, "if you could forget her face."

He couldn't forget it. As he sat there, trying to read, it came between him and his book. It tormented him to find its meaning. Kitty's face was a thing both delicate and crude. When she was gay it showed a blurred edge, a fineness in peril. When she was sad it wore the fixed look of artificial maturity. It was like a young bud opened by inquisitive fingers and forced to be a flower. Some day, the day before it withered, the bruised veins would glow again and a hectic spot betray, like a bruise, the violation of its bloom. At the moment, repose gave back its beauty to Kitty's face. Lucy noticed that the large black pupils of her eyes were ringed with a dark-blue iris, spotted with black. There was no color about her at all, except that blue, and the delicate red of her mouth. In her black gown she was a revelation of pure form. Color would have obscured her, made her ineffectual.

He sat silent, hardly daring to look at her. So keen was his sense of her that he could almost have heard the beating of her breast against her gown. Once she sighed and Lucy stirred. Once she stirred slightly, and Lucy, unconsciously responsive, sighed. Then Kitty's glance lit on him. He turned a page of his book ostentatiously and Kitty's glance slunk home again. She closed her eyes and opened them to find Lucy's eyes looking at her over the top of his book. Poor Lucy was so perturbed at being detected in that particular atrocity that he rose, drew his chair to the hearth, and arranged himself in an attitude that made these things impossi-

He was presently aware of Jane launching herself on a gentle tide of conversation and of Mrs. Tailleur trembling pathetically on the brink.

"Do you like Southbourne?" he

heard Jane saying.

Then suddenly Mrs. Tailleur

plunged in.

"No," said she. "I hate it. I hate any place I have to be alone in, if it's

only for five minutes.'

Lucy felt that it was Jane who drew back now, in sheer distress. He tried to think of something to say and gave it up, stultified by his compassion.

The silence was broken by Jane. "Robert," said she, "have you written to the children?"

Mrs. Tailleur's face became suddenly

somber and intent.

"No. I haven't. I clean forgot it." He went off to write his letter. When he came back Mrs. Tailleur had risen and was saying good night to Jane.

He followed her to the portière and drew it back for her to pass. As she turned to thank him, she glanced up at the hand that held the portière. trembled violently. Her eyes, a moment ago dark under her bent forehead, darted a sudden light sidelong.

She paused, interrogative, expectant.

Lucy bowed.

As Mrs. Tailleur passed out she looked back over her shoulder, smiling again her incomprehensible smile.

The portière dropped behind her.

#### CHAPTER V.

Five days passed. The Lucys had now been a week at Southbourne. They knew it well by that time, for bad weather kept them from going very far beyond it. Jane had found, too, that they had to know some of the visitors. The little Cliff Hotel brought its guests together with a geniality unknown to its superb rival, the Metropole. Under its roof, in bad weather, persons not otherwise incompatible, became acquainted with extraordinary rapidity. People had begun already to select each other. Even Mr. Soutar, the clergyman, had emerged from his lonely gloom, and dined by preference at the same table with the middle-aged ladies; the table farthest from the bay window. The Hankins, out of pure kindness, had taken pity on the old lady, Mrs. Jurd. They had made advances to the Lucys, perceiving an agreeable social affinity, and had afterward drawn back. For the Lucys were using the opportunity of the weather for cultivating Mrs. Tailleur.

It was not easy, they told themselves, to get to know her. She didn't talk But as Jane pointed out to much. Robert, little things came out, things that proved that she was all right. Her father was a country parson, very straitlaced, they gathered; and she had little sisters, years vounger than herself. When she talked at all, it was in a pretty, innocent way like a child's, and all her little legends were, you could see, transparently consistent. They had, like a child's, a quite funny reiterance and simplicity. But, like a child, she was easily put off by any sort of interruption. When she thought she had let herself go too far she would take fright and avoid them for the rest of the day, and they had to begin all over again with her next time.

The thing, Lucy said, would be for Jane to get her some day all alone. But Jane said, No, Mrs. Tailleur was ten times more afraid of her than of him. Besides, they had only another week, and they didn't want, did they, to see too much of Mrs. Tailleur? At that Lucy got very red and promised his sister to take her out somewhere by

themselves the next fine day.

That was on Wednesday evening, when it was raining hard.

The weather lifted with the dawn. The heavy smell of the wet earth was pierced by the fine air of heaven and the sea.

Jane Lucy leaned out of her bedroom window and looked eastward beyond the hotel garden to the cliff. The sea was full of light. Light rolled on the low waves and broke on their tops like foam. It hung quivering on the white face of the cliff. It was like a thin spray thrown from the heaving light of the sea.

At breakfast Jane reminded Robert of his promise to take her for a sail on the first fine day. They turned their backs on the hotel and went seaward. On their way to the boats they passed Mrs. Tailleur sitting on the beach in the sun.

Neither of them enjoyed that expedition. It was the first of all the things they had done together that had failed. Jane wondered why. If they weren't enjoying themselves on a day like that when, she argued, would they enjoy themselves? The day remained as perfect as it had begun. There was nothing wrong, Robert admitted, with the They sailed in the sun's path and landed in a divine and solitary cove. Robert was obliged to agree that there was nothing wrong with the cove, and nothing, no nothing in the least wrong with the lunch. There might, yes, of course there might be something wrong with him.

Whatever it was it disappeared as they sighted Southbourne. Robert, mounting with uneasy haste the steps that led from the beach to the hotel garden, was unusually gay.

They were late for dinner, and the table next theirs was empty. Outside, on the great green lawn in front of the windows, he could see Mrs. Tailleur walking up and down, alone.

He dined with the abstraction of a man pursued by the hour of an appointment. He established Jane in the lounge with all the magazines he could lay his hands on, and went out by the veranda on to the lawn where Mrs. Tailleur was still walking up and down.

The colonel and his wife were in the

veranda. They made a low sound of pity as they saw him go.

Mrs. Tailleur seemed more than ever alone. The green space was bare around her as if cleared by the sweep of her gown. She moved quietly with a long and even undulation, a yielding of her whole body to the rhythm of her feet. She had reached the far end of the lawn as Lucy neared her, and he looked for her to turn and face him. She did not turn.

The lawn at this end was bounded by a gravel walk. The walk was fenced by a low stone wall built on the edge of the cliff. Mrs. Tailleur paused there and seated herself sideways on the wall. Her face was turned from Lucy and he judged her unaware of his approach. In his eyes she gained a new enchantment from the vast and simple spaces of her background, a sea of dull purple, a sky of violet, divinely clear. Her face

had the intense, unsubstantial pallor, the

magic and stillness of flowers that stand

in the blue dusk before night.

She turned at the sound of the man's footsteps on the gravel. She smiled quietly, as if she knew of his coming and was waiting for it there. He greeted her. A few words of no moment passed between them and there was a silence. He stood by the low wall with his face set seaward, as if all his sight were fixed on the trail of smoke that marked the far-off passage of a steamer. Mrs. Tailleur's face was fixed on his. He was aware of it.

Standing beside her, he was aware, too, of something about her alien to sea and sky; something secret, impenetrable, that held her as it were apart, shut in by her own strange and solitary charm.

And she sat there, in the deep quiet of a woman intent upon her hour. He had no ear for the call of her silence, for the voice of the instincts prisoned in blood and brain.

Presently she rose, shrugging her shoulders and gathering her furs about her.

"I want to walk," she said. "Will you come?"

She led the way to the corner where

the low wall was joined by a high one, dividing the hotel garden from the open down. There was a gate here; it led to a flight of wooden steps that went zigzag to the beach below. At the first turn in the flight a narrow path was cut on the cliff side. To the right it rose inland, following the slope of the down. To the left it ran level under the low wall, then climbed higher yet to the brow of the headland. There it ended in a square recess, a small white chamber cut from the chalk and open to the sea and sky. From the floor of the recess the cliff dropped sheer to the beach two hundred feet below.

Mrs. Tailleur took the path to the

left. Lucy followed her.

The path was stopped by the bend of the great cliff, the recess roofed by its bulging forehead. There was a wooden seat, set well back under this cover. Two persons who found themselves alone there might count on security from interruption,

Mrs. Tailleur and Lucy were alone. Lucy looked at the cliff wall in front of them.

"We must go back," said he.

"Oh, no," said she. "Don't let's go back.'

"But if you want to walk?"

"I don't," said she. "Do you?" He didn't, and they seated themselves. In the charm of this intimate seclusion Lucy became more than ever dumb. Mrs. Tailleur waited a few minutes in apparent meditation.

All Lucy said was: "May I smoke?" "You may." She meditated again.

"I was wondering," said she, "whether you were ever going to say anything."

"I didn't know," said Lucy simply, "whether I might. I thought you were

thinking.'

"So I was. I was thinking of what you were going to say next. I never met anybody who said less and took so long a time to say it in."

"Well," said Lucy, "I was thinking,

"I know you were. You needn't be so afraid of me unless you like."

"I am not," said he stiffly, "in the

least afraid of you. I'm desperately afraid of saying the wrong thing." "To me? Or everybody?"

"Not everybody."

"To me, then. Do you think I might be difficult?"

"Difficult?"

"To get on with?"

"Not in the least. Possibly, if I may say so, a little difficult to know." She smiled. "I don't usually strike

people in that light.' "Well-I think I'm afraid of boring

"You couldn't if you tried from now to midnight."

"How do you know what I mightn't

"That's it. I don't know. I never should know. It's only the people I'm sure of that bore me. Don't they you?"

He laughed uneasily.

"The people," she went on, "who are sure of me, who think I'm so easy to know. They don't know me and they don't know that I know them. And they're the only people I've ever, ever met. I can tell what they're going to say before they've said it. It's always the same thing. It's—if you like—the inevitable thing. If you can't have anything but the same thing at least you like it put a little differently. think, among them all, they might find it easy to put it a little differently, sometimes. But they never do. And it's the brutal monotony of it that I cannot stand."

"I suppose," said Lucy, "people are

monotonous."

"They don't know," said she, evidently ignoring his statement as inadequate, "they don't know how sick I am of ithow insufferably it bores me."

"Ah, there you see-that's what I'm

afraid of.' "What?"

"Of saying the wrong thing-the-

the same thing."
"That's it. You'd say it differently and it wouldn't be the same thing at all. And what's more I should never know whether you were going to say it or

"There's one thing I'd like to say to

you if I knew how, if I knew how you'd take it. You see, though I think I know you—" He hesitated.

"You don't really? You don't know who I am? Or where I come from? Or where I'm going to? I don't know myself."

"I know," said Lucy, "as much as I've any right to. But unluckily the

thing I want to know---"

"Is what you haven't any right to?" "I'm afraid I haven't. The thing I want to know is simply whether I can help you. In any way."
She smiled. "Ah," said she, "you

have said it."

"Haven't I said it differently?"

"I'm not sure. You looked different when you said it. That's something."

"I know I've no right to say it at all. What I mean is that if I could do anything for you without boring you, without forcing myself on your acquaintance, I'd be most awfully glad to. You know you needn't recognize me afterward unless you like. Have I put it differently now?"

"Yes. I don't think I've ever heard

it put quite that way before."

There was a long pause in which Lucy vainly sought for illumination.

"No," said Mrs. Tailleur, as if to

"I should never know-what herself. you were going to say or do next."

"Wouldn't you?"

"No. I didn't know just now whether you were going to speak to me or not. When I said I wanted to walk I didn't know whether you'd come with me or not.

"I came."

"You came. But when I go-"

"You're not going?"

"Yes-to-morrow, perhaps, or the next day. When I go I shall give you my address and ask you to come and see me. But I sha'n't know whether you'll come.'

"Of course I'll come."

"There's no of course about you. That's the charm of it. I sha'n't know until you're actually there."

"I shall be there all right." "What? You'll come?"

"Yes. And I'll bring my sister."

"Your sister?" She drew back slightly. "Turn round, please-this way-and let me look at you."

He turned, laughing. Her eyes

searched his face.

"Yes. You meant that. Why do you want to bring your sister?"

"Because I want you to know her." "Are you sure-quite-quite sureyou want her to know me?

"Quite-quite sure. If you don't mind-if she won't bore you.

"Oh, she won't bore me."

"You're not afraid of that monotony?"

She turned and looked long at him, "You are very like your sister," she

"Am I? How? In what way?"

"In the way we've been talking about. I suppose you know how remarkable you are?"

"No, I really don't think I do."

"Then," said Mrs. Tailleur, "you are all the more remarkable.

"Don't you think," she added, "we had better go back?"

They went back. As they mounted the steps to the garden door, they saw Miss Keating approaching it from the inside. She moved along the low wall that overlooked the path by which they had just come. There was no crunching of pebbles under her feet. She trod,

inaudibly, the soft edge of the lawn. Lucy held the door open for Miss Keating when Mrs. Tailleur had passed through. But Miss Keating had turned suddenly. She made the pebbles on the walk scream with the vehemence of her retreat.

"Dear me," said Lucy, "it must be rather painful to be as shy as that."

"Mustn't it?" said Mrs. Tailleur.

### CHAPTER VI.

The next day it rained. Fitfully at first, at the will of a cold wind that dragged clouds out of heaven. A gleam of sunshine in the afternoon. wild rain driven slantwise by the gusts, and now, at five o'clock, no wind at all, but a straight, soaking downpour.

The guests at the Cliff Hotel were all

indoors. Colonel Hankin and his wife were reading in a corner of the lounge. Mr. Soutar the clergyman was dozing over a newspaper by an imaginary fire. The other men drifted continually from the bar to the billiard-room and back again.

Mrs. Tailleur and Lucy were sitting in the veranda with rugs round them, watching the rain, and watched by

Colonel and Mrs. Hankin.

Jane had gone into the drawing-room to write letters. There was nobody there but the old lady who sat in the bay of the window, everlastingly knitting, and Miss Keating, isolated on a sofa near the door.

Everybody in the hotel was happy and occupied, except Miss Keating. Her eyes followed the labor of Miss Lucy's pen, watching for the stroke that should end it. She had made up her mind

she must speak to her.

Miss Keating was subject to a passion which circumstances were perpetually frustrating. She desired to be interesting, profoundly, personally interesting to people. She disliked publicity partly because it reduced her to mournful insignificance and silence. The few moments in her life which counted were those private ones when she found attention surrendered wholly to her service. She hungered for the unworn, unwearied sympathy of strangers. Her fancy had followed and fastened on the Lucys, perceiving this exquisitely virgin quality in them. And now she was suffering from an oppression of the nerves that urged her to a supreme outpour-

Miss Lucy seemed absorbed in her correspondence. She felt that Miss Keating's eyes were upon her, and as she wrote she planned a dexterous retreat. It would, she knew, be difficult, owing to Miss Keating's complete occupation of the sofa by the door.

She had made that lady's acquaintance in the morning, having found her sitting sad and solitary in the lounge. She had then felt that it would be unkind not to say something to her, and she had spent the greater part of the morning saying it. Miss Keating had tracked the thin thread of conversation carefully, as if in search for an unapparent opportunity. Jane, aware of the watchfulness of her method, had taken fright and left her. She had had an awful feeling that Miss Keating was about to bestow a confidence on her. Somebody else's confidence which Miss Keating had broken badly, she suspected.

Jane had finished her letters. She was addressing the envelopes. Now she was stamping them. Now she was crossing the room. Miss Keating lowered her eyes as the moment came which was to bring her into communion

with the Lucys.

Jane had made her way very quietly to the door and thought to pass through it unobserved when Miss Keating seemed to leap up from her sofa as from an ambush.

"Miss Lucy," she said, and Jane turned at the penetrating sibilants of

her name.

Miss Keating thrust toward her a face of tragic and imminent appeal. A nervous vibration passed through her and communicated itself to Jane.

"What is it?" Jane paused in the

doorway.

"May I speak to you a moment?"

"Certainly."

But Miss Keating did not speak. She stood there, clasping and unclasping her hands. It struck Jane that she was trying to conceal an eagerness of which she was more than half ashamed.

"What is it?" she said again.

Miss Keating sighed. "Will you sit down? Here—I think." She glanced significantly at the old lady who was betraying unmistakable interest in the scene. There was no place where they could sit beyond her range of vision. But the sofa was on the far side of it and Miss Keating's back protested against observation.

She bent forward, her thin arms stretched out to Jane, her hands locked, as if she still held tight the confidence

she offered.

"Miss Lucy," she said, "you were so kind to me this morning, so kind and helpful." "I didn't know it."

"No, you didn't know it." Miss Keating looked down, and she smiled as if at some pleasant secret of her own. "I think when we are really helping each other we don't know it. You couldn't realize what it meant to me, your just coming up and speaking to me that way."

"I'm very glad," said Jane; and

thought she meant it.

Miss Keating smiled again. "I wonder," she said, "if I might ask you to help me—again?"

"If I can."

"You look as if you could. I'm in a great difficulty, and I would like you—if you would—to give me your advice."

"That," said Jane, "is a very danger-

ous thing to give."

"It wouldn't be in this case. If I might only tell you. There's no one in the hotel whom I can speak to."

"Surely," said Jane, "there is Mrs.

Tailleur, your friend."

"My friend? Yes, she is my friend. That's why I can't say anything to her. She is the difficulty."

"Indeed," said Jane coldly. Nothing in Miss Keating appealed to the spirit of adventurous sympathy.

"I have received so much kindness

from her. She is kind."

"Evidently," said Jane.

"That makes my position so very delicate—so very disagreeable."

"I should think it would."

Miss Keating felt the antipathy in Miss Lucy's tone. "You do think it strange of me to come to you when I don't know you?"

"No. No. People are always coming to me. Perhaps because they don't

know me."

"Ah, you see, you make them come."
"Indeed I don't. I try to stop them."
"Are you trying to stop me?"

"Yes. I think I am."
"Don't stop me, please."

"But surely it would be better to con-

sult your own people."

Miss Keating paused. Miss Lucy had suggested the obvious course which she had avoided for reasons which were not obvious even to herself.

"My own people," she murmured pensively. "They are not here."

It was not her fault if Miss Lucy jumped to the conclusion that they were dead.

"I wonder," she said, "if you see my

difficulty?"

"I see it plainly enough. Mrs. Tailleur has been very kind to you, and you want to leave her. Why?"

"I'm not sure that I ought to stay."
"You must be the best judge of your

obligations,'

"There are," said Miss Keating, "other things. I don't know that I'm a good judge of them. You see, I was brought up very carefully."

"Were you?"

"Yes. I'm not sure that it's wise to be as careful as all that—to keep young girls in ignorance of things they—things they must, sooner or later——"She paused, staring as if at an abyss.

"What things?" asked Jane bluntly. "I don't know what things. I don't know anything, I'm afraid. I'm so innocent, Miss Lucy, that I'm like a child in the dark. I think I want some one to hold my hand and tell me there's nothing there."

"Perhaps there isn't."

"Yes, but it's so dark that I can't see whether there is or isn't. I'm just like a little child. Except that it imagines things and I don't."

"Don't you? Are you sure you don't let your imagination run away with you

sometimes?"

"Not," said Miss Keating, "not on this subject. Even when I'm brought into contact." Her shoulder-blades obeyed the suggestion of her brain and shuddered. "I don't know whether it's good or bad to refuse to face things. I can't help it. All that side of life is so intensely disagreeable to me."

"It's not agreeable to me," said Jane. "And what has it got to do with Mrs.

Tailleur?"

Miss Keating smiled queerly. "I don't know. I wish I did."

"If you mean you think she isn't nice

I can tell you I'm sure you're mis-taken."

"It's not what I think. It's what other people think."

"What people?"
"The people here."

Little Jane lifted her head superbly. "We think the people here have behaved abominably to Mrs. Tailleur."

She lifted her voice, too. She didn't care who heard her. She rose, making herself look as tall as possible.

"And if you're her friend," said she,

"you ought to think so, too."

She walked out of the room, still superbly. Miss Keating was left to a painful meditation on misplaced confidence.

#### CHAPTER VII.

She had had no intention of betraying Kitty. Kitty, she imagined, had sufficiently betrayed herself. And if she hadn't, as long as Kitty chose to behave like a dubious person, she could hardly be surprised if persons by no means dubious refused to be compromised. She, Miss Keating, was in no way responsible for Kitty Tailleur. Neither was she responsible for what other people thought of her. That was all, in effect, that she had intimated to Miss Lucy.

She did not say what she herself precisely thought, nor when she had first felt that uncomfortable sensation of exposure, that little shiver of cold and shame that seized her when in Kitty Tailleur's society. She had no means of measuring the lengths to which Kitty had gone and might yet go. She was simply possessed, driven and lashed by her vision of Kitty as she had seen her yesterday; Kitty standing at the end of the garden, on the watch for Mr. Lucy; Kitty returning, triumphant, with the young man at her heels.

She had seen Kitty with other men before, but there was something in this particular combination that she could not bear to think of. All the same, she had lain awake half the night thinking of it. She had Kitty Tailleur and Mr. Lucy on her nerves.

She had desired a pretext for ap-

proaching Miss Lucy, and poor Kitty was a pretext made to her hand. Nothing could be more appealing than the spectacle of helpless innocence struggling with a problem as terrible as Kitty. Miss Keating knew all the time that as far as she was concerned there was no problem. If she disliked being with Kitty she had nothing to do but to pack up and go. Kitty had said in the beginning that if she didn't like her she must go.

That course was obvious but unattractive. And the most obvious and most unattractive thing about it was that it would not have brought her any further with the Lucys. It would, in fact, have removed her altogether from

their view.

But she had done for herself now with the Lucys. She should have kept her nerves to herself. They were in an awful state. And as the state of her nerves was owing to Kitty, she held Kitty responsible for the crisis. She writhed as she thought of it. She writhed as she thought of Mr. Lucy. She writhed as she thought of Kitty, and writhing, she rubbed her own venom into her hurt.

Of course she would have to leave

Kitty

But, if she did, the alternatives were grim. She would have either to go back to her own people, or to look after somebody's children or an invalid. Her own people were not interested in Miss Keating. Children and invalids demanded imperatively that she should be interested in them. And Miss Keating, unfortunately, was not interested in anybody but herself.

So interested was she that she had forgotten the old lady who sat knitting in the window, who distracted by Miss Lucy's outburst had let her ball roll on to the floor. It rolled away across the room to Miss Keating's feet, and there was a great tangle in the wool. Miss Keating picked up the ball and brought it to the old lady, winding and disentangling it as she went.

"Thank you, my wool is a nuisance to everybody," said the old lady. And she began to talk about her knitting. All the year round she knitted comforters for the deep-sea fishermen, gray and red and blue. When she was tired of one color she went to another. It would be red's turn next.

Miss Keating felt as if she were being drawn to the old lady by that thin thread of wool. And the old lady kept looking at her all the time.

"Your face is familiar to me," she said. Oddly enough, the old lady's face was familiar to Miss Keating. "I have met you somewhere. I cannot think where."

"I wonder," said Miss Keating, "if it was at Wenden, my father's parish?"

The old lady's look was sharper.

"Your father is the vicar of Wenden?"
"Yes."

"I thought so."

"Do you know him?" The ball slipped from Miss Keating's nervous fingers and the wool was tangled worse than ever.

"No, no. But I could tell that you were—" She hesitated. "It was at Ilkley that I met you. It's coming back to me. You were not then with Mrs. Tailleur, I think? You were with an invalid lady?"

"Yes. I was, until I broke down."
"May I ask if you knew Mrs. Tailleur before you—came to her?"

"No. I knew nothing of her. I

know nothing now."

"Oh," said the old lady. It was as if she had said: That settles it.

The wool was disentangled. It was winding them nearer and nearer.

"Have you been with her long?"

"Have you been with her long?"
"Not more than three months."

There were only five inches of wool between them now. "Do you mind telling me where you picked her up?"

Miss Keating remembered with compunction that it was Kitty who had picked her up. Picked her up, as it were in her arms, and carried her away from the dreadful northern "Hydropathic" where she had dropped, forlorn and exhausted, in the trail of her opulent invalid.

"It was at Matlock, afterward. Why?"

"Because, my dear-you must for-

give me, but I could not help hearing what that young lady said. She was so very—so very unrestrained."

"Very ill-bred, I should say."

"Well—I should not have said that. You couldn't mistake the Lucys for anything but gentle people. Evidently I was meant to hear. I've no doubt she thinks us all very unkind."

"Unkind? Why?"

"Because we have—have not exactly—taken to Mrs. Tailleur, if you'll for-

give my saying so.'

Miss Keating's smile forgave her. "People do not always take to her. She is more a favorite, I think, with men." She gave the ball into the old lady's hands.

The old lady coughed slightly. "Thank you, my dear. I dare say you have thought it strange. We are such a friendly little community here. And if Mrs. Tailleur had been at all possible—."

"I believe," said Miss Keating, "she is very well connected. Lord Matcham is a most intimate friend of hers."

"That doesn't speak very well for Lord Matcham, I'm afraid."

"I wish," said Miss Keating, "you would be frank with me."

"I should like to be, my dear."

"Then—please—if there's anything you think I should be told—tell me."

"I think you ought to be told that we are all wondering a little at your being seen with Mrs. Tailleur. You are too nice, if I may say so, and she is—well, not the sort of person you should be going about with."

Miss Keating's mouth opened slight-

"Do you know anything about her?"
"I know less than you do. I'm only
going by what Colonel Hankin says."

"Colonel Hankin?"

"Mrs. Hankin, I should say. Of course I couldn't speak about Mrs. Tailleur to him."

"Has he ever met her?"

"Met her? In society? My dear! He has never met her anywhere."

"Then would he—would he really know?"
"It isn't only the colonel. All the

men in the hotel say the same thing. You can see how they stare at her."

"Oh-those men!"

"You may depend upon it, they know more than we do."

"How can they? How-how do they

tell?"

"I suppose they see something."

Miss Keating saw it, too. She shuddered involuntarily. Her knees shook under her. She sat down.

"I'm sure I don't know what it is,"

said the old lady.

"Nor I," said Miss Keating faintly.
"They say you've only got to look at her—"

A dull flush spread over Miss Keating's face. She was breathing hard. Her mouth opened to speak; a thick sigh came through it, but no words.

"I've looked," said the old lady, "and I can't see anything about her different from other people. She dresses so quietly; but I'm told they often do. They're very careful that we shouldn't know them."

"They? Oh-you don't mean that

Mrs. Tailleur-is-"

"I'm only going by what I'm told. Mind you, I get it all from Mrs. Hankin."

Miss Keating, who had been leaning forward, sat suddenly bolt upright. Her whole body was shaking now. Her voice was low but violent.

"Oh-oh-I knew it-I knew. I always felt there was something about

her."

"I'm sure, my dear, you didn't

know."

"I didn't. I didn't think it was that. I only thought she wasn't nice. I thought she was fast, or she'd been divorced, or something—something terrible of that sort."

She still sat bolt upright, gazing openeyed, open-mouthed at the terror. She was filled with a fierce excitement, a sort of exultation. Then doubt came to

her.

"But surely—surely—the hotel people

would know?"

"Hotel people never know anything that isn't their interest to know. If there were any complaint, or if any of the guests were to leave on account of her, Mrs. Tailleur would have to go."

"And has there been any complaint?"
"I believe Mr. Soutar—the clergyman—has spoken to the manager."

"And the manager?"

"Well, you see, Mr. Soutar is always complaining. He complained about the food, and about his bedroom. He has the cheapest bedroom in the hotel."

Miss Keating was thinking hard. Her idea was that Kitty Tailleur should go

and that she should remain.

"Don't you think if Colonel Hankin

spoke to the manager-"

"He wouldn't. He's much too kind. Besides, the manager can't do anything as long as she behaves herself. And now that the Lucys have taken her up—— And then, there's you. Your being with her is her great protection. As she very well knew when she engaged you."

"I was engaged for that!"

"There can be little doubt of it."

"Oh—then nobody thinks that I knew it? That—I'm like her?"

"Nobody could think that of you."

"What am I to do? I'm so helpless, and I've no one to advise me. And it's not as if we really knew anything." "My dear, I think you should leave

her."

"Of course I shall leave her. I can't stay another day. But I don't know how I ought to do it."

"Would you like to consult Colonel

Hankin?"

"Oh, no. I don't think I could bear to speak about it to him."

"Well, and perhaps he would not like

to be brought into it, either."

"Then—what reason can I give her?"
"Of course you cannot tell her what you've heard."

Miss Keating was silent.

"Or if you do, you must please not give me as your informant."

"I will not do that."

"Nor-please-Colonel and Mrs. Hankin. We none of us want to be mixed up with any unpleasant business"

"You may trust me," said Miss Keating. "I am very discreet."

She rose. The old lady held her with detaining eyes.

"What shall you do when you have

"I suppose I shall have to look for another place."

"You are not going home, then?"

Miss Keating's half-smile hinted at renunciation. "I have too many young-

"Well, let me see. I shall be going back to Surbiton to-morrow. would it be if you were to come with me?"

"Oh, Mrs.-Mrs.--" The smile wavered, but it held its place.

"Mrs. Jurd. If we suited each other you might stay with me, at any rate for a week or two. I've been a long time looking out for a companion."

Keating's smile strained with hesitation. Mrs. Jurd was not an invalid and she was interested in Miss Keating. These were points in her favor. On the other hand, nobody who could do better would choose to live with Mrs. Jurd and wind wool and

talk about the deep-sea fishermen.
"I am living," said Mrs. Jurd, "with
my nephew at Surbiton. I have to keep

his house for him.'

"Then, do you think you would really

need any one?"

"Indeed I do. My nephew isn't a companion for me. He's in the city all day and out most evenings, or he brings his friends in and they get smoking and so-

Miss Keating's smile was now released from its terrible constraint. A slight tremor, born of that deliverance, passed over her face, and left it rosv. But having committed herself to the policy of hesitation she had a certain delicacy in departing from it now.

"Are you quite sure you would care to have me?"

"My dear, I am quite sure that I don't care to have any one who is not a lady. And I am quite sure that I am talking to a lady. It is very seldom in these days that one can be sure."

Miss Keating made a little bow and

blushed.

After a great deal of conversation it

was settled that she should exchange the Cliff Hotel for the Metropole that night, and that in the morning she should leave Southbourne for Surbiton with Mrs. Jurd.

When Colonel and Mrs. Hankin looked in to report upon the weather this scheme was submitted to them as to supreme judges in a question of pro-

priety.

Mrs. Tailleur was not mentioned. Her name stood for things that decorous persons do not mention, except under certain sanctions and the plea of privilege. The colonel might mention them to his wife, and his wife might mention them to Mrs. Jurd who might pass them on with unimpeachable propriety to Miss Keating. But these ladies were unable to discuss Mrs. Tailleur in the presence of the colonel. Still, as none of them could do without her, she was permitted to appear in a purified form, veiled in obscure references, or diminished to an innocent abstraction.

Miss Keating, Mrs. Jurd said, was not at all satisfied with her-er-her

present situation.

The colonel lowered his eyes for one iniquitous instant while Mrs. Tailleur, disguised as Miss Keating's present situation, laughed through the veil and trailed before him her unabashed enormity.

He managed to express with becoming gravity his approval of the scheme. He only wondered whether it might not be better for Miss Keating to stay where she was until the morning, that her step might not seem so precipitate,

Miss Keating replied that she thought she had been sufficiently compromised

"I don't think," said the colonel, "that

I should put it that way."

He felt that by putting it that way Miss Keating had brought them a little too near what he called the verge, the verge they were all so dexterously avoiding. He would have been glad if he could have been kept out of this somewhat perilous debate, but, since the women had dragged him into it, it was his business to see that it was confined

within the limits of comparative safety. Goodness knew where they would be landed if the women lost their heads.

He looked gravely at Miss Keating. That look unnerved her and she took a staggering step that brought her within measurable distance of the verge.

The colonel might put it any way he There must not be a liked, she said. moment's doubt as to her attitude.

Now it was not her attitude that the colonel was thinking of, but his own. It had been an attitude of dignity, of judicial benevolence, of incorruptible reserve. Any sort of unpleasantness was agony to a man who had the habit of perfection. It was dawning on him that unless he exercised considerable caution he would find himself mixed up in an uncommonly disagreeable affair. He might even be held responsible for it, since the dubiousness of the topic need never have emerged if he had not unveiled it to his wife. So that, when Miss Keating in her unsteadiness declared that there must not be a moment's doubt as to her attitude, the colonel himself was seized with a slight vertigo. He suggested that peopleluckily, he got no nearer it than thatpeople were, after all, entitled to the benefit of any doubt there might be.

Then when the danger was sheer in front of them he drew back. Keating, he said, had nobody but herself to please. He had no more light to throw on the-er-the situation. Really, he said to himself, they couldn't have hit on a more serviceable word.

He considered that he had now led the discussion to its close on lines of irreproachable symbolism. Nobody had overstepped the verge. Mrs. Tailleur had not once been mentioned. might have disappeared behind the shelter provided by the merciful silent decencies. Colonel Hankin had shown his unwillingness to pursue her into the dim and undesirable regions whence she came.

Then suddenly Miss Keating cried out her name.

She had felt herself abandoned, left there, all alone on the verge, and before any of them knew where they were she was over it. Happily, she was unaware of the violence with which she went. She seemed to herself to move, downward indeed, but with a sure and slow propulsion. She believed herself challenged to the demonstration by the colonel's attitude. The high distinction of it, that was remotely akin to Mr. Lucy's, somehow obscured and degraded her. She conceived a dislike to this well-behaved and honorable gentleman, and for his visible perfections, the clean silver whiteness and the pinkness of him.

His case was clear to her. He was a man, and he had looked at Kitty Tailleur, and his sympathies, like Mr. Lucy's, had suffered an abominable perversion. His judgment, like Mr. Lucy's, had surrendered to the horrible charm. She said to herself bitterly, that she could not compete with that.

She trembled as she faced the colonel. "Very well, then," said she, "as there is no one to help me, I must protect myself. I shall not sleep another night under the same roof as Mrs. Tailleur."

The three winced as if the name had been a blow struck at them. colonel's silver eyebrows rose bristling. Mrs. Hankin got up and went out of the room. Mrs. Jurd bent her head over her knitting. None of them looked at Miss Keating; not even the colonel as he spoke.

"If you feel like that about it," said he, "there is nothing more to be said." He rose and followed his wife.

Up-stairs, when their bedroom door had closed on them, he reproved her very seriously for her indiscretion.

"You asked me," said he, "what I thought of Mrs. Tailleur and I told you. But I never said you were to go and hand it on. What on earth have you been saying to those women?"

"I didn't say anything to Miss Keat-

ing."
"No, but you must have to Mrs, What's-her-name?"

"Not very much. I don't like talking about unpleasant subjects, as you

"Well, somebody's been talking about them. I shouldn't wonder after this if poor Mrs. Tailleur's room were wanted to-morrow."

"Oh, do you think they'll turn her

She was a kind woman and she could not bear to think it would come to that.

The colonel was silent. He was sitting on the bed, watching his wife as she undid the fastenings of her gown. At that moment a certain brief and sudden sin of his youth rose up before him. It looked at him pitifully, reproachfully, with the eyes of Mrs. Tailleur.

"I wish," said Mrs. Hankin, "we hadn't said anything at all."

"So do I," said the colonel. But for the life of him he couldn't help saying something more. "If she goes," he said, "I rather think that young fellow will go, too."

"And the sister?"

"Oh-the sister, I imagine, will remain."

#### CHAPTER VIII.

Kitty was dressed. She was calling out to her companion: "Bunny, hurry up, you'll be late." No answer came from the adjoining room. She tapped at the door and there was no answer. She tried to open the door. It was locked on the inside. "Bunny," she cried, "are you there?" She laid her ear to the panel. There was the sound of a box being dragged across the floor.

"You are there, are you? Why don't you answer? I can't hear you. Why can't you open the door?"

Miss Keating unlocked the door. She held it ajar and spoke through the aperture.

"Be good enough," she said, "to leave me alone."

"All right. But you'll be awfully late for dinner."

"I am not coming down to dinner."

Miss Keating shut the door, but she did not lock it.

Kitty gave a cry of distress.

"Bunny, what is the matter? Let me in-do let me in."

"You can come in if you like."

Kitty opened the door. But instead of going in, she stood fixed upon the threshold, struck dumb by what she

The room was in disorder. Clothes littered the bed. More clothes were heaped on the floor around an open trunk. Miss Keating was kneeling on the floor seizing on things and thrust-ing them into the trunk. Their strangled, tortured forms witnessed to the violence of her mood,

"What are you doing?"

"You can see what I'm doing. I am packing my things."

"Why?

"Because I am going away."

"Have you had bad news? anybody dead?"

"I wouldn't ask any questions if I were you.'

"I must ask some. You know, people don't walk off like this without giving any reason."

"I am surprised at your asking for

my reason."

"Sur-prised," said Kitty softly. "Are you going because of me?"

Miss Keating did not answer. "I see. So you don't like me any more?"

"We won't put it that way."

Kitty came and stood beside Miss Keating and looked down at her. "Bunny, have I been a brute to you?"

"No."

"Have I ever been a brute to any one? Have you ever known me do an unkind thing, or say an unkind word to any one?'

"N-no."

"Then why do you listen when people say unkind things about me?"

Miss Keating stooped very low over the trunk. Her attitude no doubt accounted for the redness of her face which Kitty noticed.

"I think I know what they've been saying. Did you or did you not listen?"

"Listen?"

"Yes. I don't mean behind doors and things. But you let them talk to you?"

"You cannot stop people talking."

"Can't you? I'd have stopped them pretty soon if they'd talked to me about you. What did they say?"

"You've said just now you knew."
"Very well. Who said it?"

"You've no reason to assume that anybody has said anything."

"Was it Mr. Lucy or his sister?" Miss Keating became agitated.

"I have never discussed you with Mr. Lucy. Or his sister." There was a little click in Miss Keating's throat where the lie stuck.

"I know you haven't. They wouldn't

let you."

Kitty smiled. Miss Keating saw the smile. She trembled. Tears started to her eyes. She rose and began sorting

the pile of clothing on the bed.

Something in her action inspired Kitty with an intolerable passion of wonder and of pity. She came to her and laid her hand on her hair, lightly and with a certain fear.

Miss Keating had onee purred under Kitty's caresses. Now she jerked back suddenly and beat off the timid hand.

"I wish you wouldn't touch me."

"Why not?"

"Because it makes me loathe you." Kitty sat down on the bed. She had wrapped her hand in her pocket-handkerchief as if it had been hurt.

"Poor Bunny," she said. "Are you You must feeling as bad as all that? want dreadfully to marry that long man, But you needn't loathe me. I'm not going to make him marry me."

"Can you not think of anything but

that?"

"I can think of all sorts of things. At present I'm thinking of that. It does seem such an awful pity that you haven't married. A dear little, sweet little, good little thing like you—for you are good, Bunny. It's a shame that you should have to live in rage and fury, and be very miserable, and-and rather cruel, just because of that."

"If every word you said of me was true I'd rather be myself than you,

Mrs. Tailleur."

"That-Miss Keating-is purely a matter of taste. Unhappiness is all that is the matter with you. You'd be quite

a kind woman if it wasn't for that. You see, I do understand you, Bunny. So it isn't very wise of you to leave me. Think what an awful time you'll have if you go and live with somebody who doesn't understand and won't make allowances. And you're not strong. You never will be as long as you're miserable. You'll go and live with ill old ladies and get into that state you were in at Matlock. And there won't be anybody to look after you. And, Bunny, you'll never marry-never; and it'll be simply awful. You'll go getting .older and older, and nervier and ner- \* vier, till you're so nervy that even the old ladies won't have you any more. Bad as I am, you'd better stop with me."

"Stop with you? How can I stop

with you?"

"Well, you haven't told me yet why you can't."

"I can't tell you. I-I've written you a letter. It's there on the dressing-

Kitty went to the dressing-table. "I am returning you my salary for the quarter I have been with you."

Kitty took up the letter. "I'd rather you did not read it until

after I am gone."

"That's not fair, Bunny."

"Please-I've written what I had to say because I wished to avoid a scene." "There won't be any scene. I'm not going to read your beastly letter."

She opened the envelope and removed the notes and laid them on the dressing-table. Then she tore up the letter and the envelope together and tossed them into the grate.

"And I'm not going to take those

notes.'

"Nor am I."

"You'll have to." She found her companion's purse and tucked the notes inside it.

Miss Keating turned on her. "Mrs. Tailleur, you shall not thrust your money on me. I will not take it." "You little fool, you've got to."

Miss Keating closed her eyes. It was a way she had. "I can't. And you must please take back the things you've given me. They are all there, in that

heap on the bed.'

Kitty turned and looked at them. They were all there; everything she had ever given to her, the dresses, the combs, the little trinkets. She took some of these and stared at them as she held them in her hand.

"Won't you keep anything?" "I won't keep a thing."

"Not even the little chain I gave you? Oh, Bunny, you liked your little chain." Miss Keating took the chain from

her and laid it with the rest. "Please leave me to pack."

"Presently. Bunny-look at mestraight. Why are you doing this?"

"I wish to be spared the unpleasant-ness of speaking."

"But you've got to speak. Out with What have I done?"

"You know better than I do what your life has been."

"My life? I should think I did. Rather."

Kitty crossed the room to the bell. "What time does your train go?" My— I—I must leave this at seven-thirty."

Kitty rang the bell. A housemaid appeared.

"I want a fly at seven-thirty. Please see that Miss Keating's luggage is down-stairs by then. Her room will not be wanted."

Miss Keating's face was livid. "You wish," said she, "the hotel people to think that it is you who have

given me notice?"

"You poor thing. I only wanted the fly to go down to my account."

"You expect me to believe that?" "I don't expect anything of younow. I suppose it's Colonel Hankin who has been talking about my life? It wasn't Mr. Lucy, though you'd like to make me think so."

"There's no need for anybody to talk. Do you suppose I don't know what you are? You can't hide what's in you. You're—you're full of it. And you've no shame about it. You can stand there. knowing that I know, and ask me what you've done. How do I know what you've done? I don't want to know it.

It's bad enough to know what you are. And to know that I've been living with it for three months. You got hold of me an innocent woman, and used me as a cover for your evil life. That's all you wanted me for."

"Whatever I've done, I've done noth-

ing to deserve that.'

"You think not? Have you any idea

what you've done-to me?"

"No. I haven't. What have I done?" "I'm going to tell you. You've never ceased casting it up to me that I'm not married, that I haven't your attractions -I thank Heaven I have not. I am not the sort of woman you take me for. I never have wanted to be married, but if-if ever I had I shouldn't want it You've spoiled all that for me. I shall never see a man without thinking of you. I shall hate every man I meet because of you."

"Well, hate them, hate them. It's better than loving them- Let me strap that box. You'll tear your poor

heart out."

Miss Keating wrenched the strap

from Kitty's hands.

"Ah, how you hate me. Hate the men, dear. That can't do you any harm. But don't hate the other women. At my worst I never did that."

Miss Keating shrugged her shoulders, for she was putting on her coat. Kitty looked at her and sighed.

"Bunny," said she, "I want to make it quite clear to you why you're going. You think it's because you know something horrible about me. But it isn't. You don't know anything about me. You've only been listening to some of the people in the hotel. They don't know anything about me, either. They've never met me in their lives before. But they've been thinking things and saying things, and you've swallowed it all because you wanted to. You're so desperately keen on making out there's something bad about me. Of course, you might have made it out. You might have proved all sorts of things against me. But you haven't. You haven't That's my whole point. proved a thing, have you? If you were my husband and wanted to get rid of

me you'd have to trump up some evidence, wouldn't you?"

"There is no need to trump up evidence. I'm acting on my instinct and belief."

"Oh, I know you believe it all right."

"I can't help what I believe."

"No, you can't help it. You can't help what you want. And you wouldn't have wanted it if you hadn't been so furiously unhappy. I was furiously unhappy myself once. That's why I understand you."

"It is five and twenty minutes past

seven, Mrs. Tailleur.

"And in five minutes you'll go. And you won't hear a word in my defense? You won't? Why, if I'd murdered somebody and they were going to hang me they'd let me defend myself before they did it. All I was going to say was: Supposing everything you said was true, I think you might have made allowances for me. You can't? I was harder driven than you.'

"No two cases could well be more

different.'

"Once they were the same. Only it was worse for me. All your temptations are bottled up inside you. Mine rushed at me from inside and outside, too. I've had all the things you had. I had a strait-laced parson for my father -so had you. I was poked away in a hole in the country—so were you. I had little sisters—so had you. My mother sent me away from home for fear I should harm them." Her voice shook. "I wouldn't have harmed them for the world. I was sent to live with an old lady-so were you. I was shut up with her all day, till I got ill and couldn't sleep at night. I never saw a soul but one or two other old ladies. They were quite fond of me-I made them. I should have died of it if it hadn't been for that. Then-do listen, Bunny-something happened, and I broke loose, and got away. You never had a chance to get away, so you don't know what it feels like, Perhaps, I

think, when it came to the point you'd have been afraid, or something. I wasn't. And I was young. I'm young still. You can't judge me. Anyhow, I know what you've been through. That's what made me sorry for you. Can't you be a little sorry for me?"

Miss Keating said nothing. She was putting on her hat, and her mouth at the moment was closed tight over a long hat-pin. She drew it out slowly be-tween her shut lips. Meeting Kitty's

eyes she blinked.

"You needn't be sorry," said Kitty. "I've had things that you haven't."

Miss Keating turned to the lookingglass and put on her veil. Her back was toward Kitty. The two women's faces were in the glass, the young face and the middle-aged, each searching for the other. Kitty's face was tearful and piteous; it pleaded with the other face in the glass, a face furtive with hate, that hung between two lifted arms, behind a veil.

Miss Keating's hands struggled with

"I mayn't tie it for you?" said Kitty. "No, thank you."

There was a knock at the door, and Miss Keating started. "It's the men for your boxes. Come

into my room and say good-by.

"I prefer to say good-by here, if it's all the same to you. Good-by.

"You won't even shake hands with me? Well, if you won't Why should you? I am holding out my hand. If you won't take it-

"No, no. I don't want to take it."

Kitty was crying.

"I must let those men in," said Miss "You are not going to make Keating.

.. I 3 Oh. Lord, no. You needn't

mind me. I'll go.

She went into her own room and flung herself face downward on to her pillow, and slid by the bedside, kneeling, to the floor.





EYSER knew when he took his young wife to Newton that she might find obstacles in her social pathway; but with that vague masculine optimism which never

quite fathoms the sources of feminine hostility, he hoped that such a tempting bait as Mrs. Keyser placed before the elderly ladies of the sedate old New England town might appease their carefully veiled but patent antipathy to himself—an antipathy which seemed not so much a matter of person as of principle, for it always retreated into the background with personal contact, though its shadow never entirely left the eyes of these feminine inhabitants.

Who could blame them? Newton, once quiet, sober and sedate, had become loud, noisy, vulgar and pushing. Newton was not Newton to them any longer. It was Keyser. He dominated the place and the people—everybody but a handful of quiet, reserved, insignificant, middle-aged little women who refused to consider him socially.

And Keyser loved the place. Having made himself one with its fortunes, he was ambitious for it. It was his idol. Busy, happy, successful, as he was, he laughed whimsically and a bit wistfully to himself whenever he thought of that grim, unbending contempt of him and his ideals, or of those bars which had never been lowered for him; for Keyser had been a common day-laborer before he took to owning and establishing factories.

They might have accepted him had he

married one of their daughters; instead, he committed the crime of marrying Mrs. Keyser.

Why Keyser, shrewd, clever and worldly-wise, had picked out Mrs. Keyser for a life-companion, these old dames could not understand. To them she was an ideal fool. To many, however, she was merely that saddest of all objects, a complacent young woman with a college education and some social-settlement training, lacking absolutely the saving grace of a sense of humor, but possessing to a superlative degree a belief in her mission to regulate and regenerate the world about her.

Keyser, to be sure, had a delicately epicurean sense of humor, but Mrs. Keyser did not know this, and she considered herself divinely appointed by marriage to administer his affairs, to dispense sweetness and light to the heathen in the uttermost parts of his factories, and to spill as much over as she could for the Newtonians of the limited vision, to vouchsafe to them beams from authorized batteries of incandescent knowledge.

And Keyser, poor simple man, rejoicing in her radiant self-complacency, believed that because she was a woman she would understand women better than he did and would lay that lurking devil of social contempt which looked out at him from the eyes of those little old ladies of Newton.

But Mrs. Keyser was worse than Keyser. She wounded all of their inherited sensibilities, trampled upon all of their traditions, and did everything that she ought not to have done and nothing that she should have done; but she did honestly admire the possessions and belongings with which the old homes of Newton were filled; and she spent much time in lauding the wisdom of forebears in bequeathing to descendants such genuinely good and beautiful furniture, and silver, and pewter, and brass; and she extolled the sentiment that had induced the present owners to save and cherish those ancestral belong-

When Newton, therefore, under Keyser's laudable desire to advertise the town, decided to have, like so many of its sister communities, a "home-coming," to welcome back from land and sea its daughters and sons and their daughters and sons, Keyser's and Mrs. Keyser's names headed the two committees of arrangement for, a week's rejoicing, and Mrs. Keyser decided that a Loan Exhibition of those cherished belongings would fitly celebrate the event and illustrate the glory of the town.

Like the Greeks bearing gifts, she went to the "chipmunks," as Keyser playfully called the Keyser-deposed autocrats of the town, and with radiant self-complacency offered them the privilege of exhibiting their "lovely old furniture" for the price of her good-will. They conveyed to her that they considered this an empty honor and met her suggestions with grim denial. urged and insisted, but to no avail. They refused to allow their furniture to be

Then she carried her perplexities to Keyser and he cajoled their husbands into a sullen consent; and Mrs. Keyser built air-castles of old pewter, and Chinese ivories, and Canton china, and brass, and silver, and fine old mahogany furniture of Colonial pattern, with herself dispensing vicarious hospitalities in its temporary possession; but Keyser felt again the fluttering wings of that living hostility and was sorry that he

taken out of their homes.

The "chipmunks" came in a body to assure him, not his wife, of their intention to permit the exhibition of such pieces of furniture as his wife should choose after inspection.

had forced the point for his wife.

"Well, now, that's good of you," he

declared heartily, as he asked them into his private office and offered them chairs which they declined. "I am sure, you'll all be glad, when it's over, that you have been so generous. We're going to make this a notable occasion,' he explained genially, "an occasion of welcome and hospitality, and you older people here ought to take the lead in advertising our town. Outsiders ought to know and understand what it is to live in a place like Newton. You see. it expresses the solidity of age and strength along with the vigor of youth when we can show them old family possessions that have been cherished as yours have been-" He stopped a moment almost shocked by the swift anguish that swept over their faces, but caught his breath and words again as he added: "And our factories. it's an education for us younger people who don't and can't own such things, just to see them."

He could almost have sworn that these women wanted to choke the words in his throat, nor could he understand the baffled, defiant rage in their eyes which changed to a feline sort of satisfaction as he said good-humoredly, ex-

pansively, almost intimately:

"My wife, you see, has made a study of old furniture. She has a library of books on the subject and she's a sort of authority. She's been daft about your furniture ever since she first saw it, and I am glad you consented to humor her. Indeed I am! She's as proud of your things as if they were her own; she knows how to appreciate the genuinely good."

Again Keyser noted their inscrutable smiles which deepened into chuckles of repressed laughter, backed by that sardonic reserve which they always meted out to him. Somehow, he felt a touch of uneasiness in that consent wrung from these women; as one might feel in buying real estate to find obscurely hidden a flaw in the title. He was too busy, however, to consider this long, and having accepted the bauble of a grudging consent, he turned it over to his wife to make what she could of it.

Mrs. Kevser worked with real joy in

her tasks that grew out of the Loan Exhibition, and tried to urge her assistants to an equal measure of enthusiasm, without much success; so most of the work devolved on herself. Indeed, her buoyancy of spirit was a very vital cause of complaint among those less opulently endowed. We are all cursed with a touch of the saturnine when it comes to too much good luck and optimism in others than ourselves, and Newton was not above its times or its people. It envied and picked flaws like every other place of its size; and it considered Mrs. Keyser a shining mark.

She accepted her burdens, or rather sought them on this occasion, with that cock-sure faith in herself which is bound to arouse antagonism in equally pronounced individualities, a lazy scorn in the more supine; and there were those who suffered her to see that she

was riding for a fall.

Undeterred by any absence of enthusiasm in her associates, however, and oblivious of small and petty jealousies, she moved on her rejoicing way. She secured the promise, after personal inspection, of a Heppelwhite sideboard, a group of Chippendale chairs, a Sheraton table, a Flemish carved cabinet, a Holland chest, highboys, lowboys, and other interesting relics of older periods of domestic life.

When the days of the "home-coming" drew nigh, there only remained to have the promised treasures removed and set in place in the position already prepared in the large and commodious

town hall.

But Keyser, coming home late the afternoon of the day chosen for removal, found his wife preparing something for the event, sitting sewing with Annette Wareham, an old-timer in Newton, a model seamstress of the house-to-house variety, a book of information both real and fictional, and the purveyor of news and gossip, ancient as well as modern. As he walked through his wife's sitting-room, turned temporarily into a sewing-room, he felt that disturbance of thought which defines itself in time as "a scene"; and with unconscious self-protection, he passed on into his own

library. Hardly had he sat down before Mrs. Keyser came in, sewing in hand, and sat down opposite him.

As she faced him, he looked up vaguely troubled, and noted the hectic flush upon her cheeks and the expression of her face. So might devout Christians have looked as they pitchforked heretics in boiling oil during the ardent days of the Reformation. There was a solemn light of holy joy in her eyes as if she knew her duty and meant to fulfil it, no matter how difficult and distasteful the task; more—she even courted the opportunity to do so.

With that assumed joviality with which mere man greets these outward evidences of inward purpose, and strives to defeat their aim, Keyser said:

"Well, I suppose the furniture is in place now, and that we can congratulate ourselves on the outlook for success in the home-coming. Everything seems to be well in hand and to promise the best results."

Mrs. Keyser looked at him and his heart withered within him. "I am glad you feel so," she replied coldly. "I do not." And then indignation demanding its outflow, she declared with some heat: "No, everything is not in place. Nothing is in place for the Loan Exhibition, so far as I know; I am undecided as to whether it ever will be. I have never in all my life dreamed of such duplicity, such a system of deception as I have unearthed in this town. I have come to the conclusion that nothing is real, that everything is a sham. I am even wondering," dramatically, "if you are genuine."

Keyser was beginning to wonder the same thing himself, but he crushed back any effort to prove himself, as his curi-

osity rose.

"What's the matter?" he asked, going

to the root of the disturbance.

"Matter? I went to-day to see about having the furniture removed to the town hall—the antique furniture!" with scornful emphasis. She threw her hands out dramatically as she cast her sewing aside and sat forward on the edge of her chair. "The antique furniture, the antique furniture! There isn't any an-

tique furniture. I don't believe there is a stick of genuine antique in this place."

"Why—why—what do you mean?" asked Keyser in astonishment. "You said there was. It was you who told me that all this furniture was so lovely, so fine and wonderful. You who

wanted to show it off."

"Of course," she replied, with cold decisiveness. "Of course. That's what makes it so much more reprehensible. They knew that I admired it. They let me. They never told me differently. I never dreamed of it not being real; and so when I saw it to-day in the broad light, I said nothing about it, but I put off taking it until I had made a decision about the matter."

"But you said that you knew."

"Certainly, certainly," dismissing contemplation of this point. "Now," sternly, "I have made my decision. Either I shall refuse to have the exhibition at all—"

"Oh, come now. You can't do that. What difference does it make if it isn't real? You can't break up the show now. If you were deceived, ten to one everybody else will be, too. Let it go,"

with magnanimity.

"Certainly not! Make myself a partner in a lie? A deception of the people who will pay an admission-fee to see furniture that can be bought in any good-sized shop? No, indeed. It is not the furniture that is so valuable, though it is better made than can be secured to-day, but it is the associations that have woven themselves about it that distinguish the antique, and so they have presented it to all beholders. cannot conceive of any people living comfortably with such a palpable lie under their roofs, day after day. should expect to drop dead at any moment.'

"Well," whimsically, amusedly, "they seem to have survived, and as far as I can see they seem to have thrived. Well—well—well! That is a story.

Are you sure?"

"Fortunately, this time I am."

"Well! Think of the chipmunks!"

He put back his head and laughed until the room rang. "Posing as possess-

ors of valuables that are sham! Well—well! And they wouldn't have me because I am paste-jewelry!" He laughed until the tears ran down his cheeks.

"I see nothing to laugh at," argued his wife. "A lie does not seem to me

to be a subject for mirth."

But Keyser continued to laugh. The expression of cold disdain on his wife's face made him gasp until he choked with laughter. He rose to leave the room to get a drink of water; he could not in decency, in view of her restrained indignation, laugh any more; but—the condition of affairs, his wife, the chipmunks—— He broke out again and again, and in making a hasty retreat from the room, he came upon Annette Wareham, the seamstress, in suspicious proximity to the keyhole.

He stopped short and looked at her. She began volubly to explain. "Excuse me, sir—excuse me. I was just apickin' up a needle Mis' Keyser, she dropped. Say, Mr. Keyser, I want to tell you. I told Mis' Keyser how it happened about the furniture." Annette seemed to have no shame of inferences to be drawn from the obvious association of her choice of subjects and posi-

tion in the room.

Keyser leaned against the door-post and lazily and curiously contemplated her as one would the antics of an in-

sect-and listened.

"I just want to say they ain't no wrong intended," excitedly. "I could a told Mis' Keyser 'twa'n't no real furniture like as they had onct, 'cause they did have it but they sold it. I could a told her if she'd a asked me. They sold their real old furniture years ago to them there old furniture pedlers when they first come around. They got right smart good prices for it, too, and they thought they was doin' good work to get anything for old trash so long out a style. But my Lord! You ought to a seen them ladies when they found out what they'd a done; an' that old furniture they'd been ashamed of when it stood in their houses all the rage."

Annette was excitedly pleating her apron and tying and untying the strings of it as she realized from the expression

on Keyser's face that he was appre-

ciating her skill as a narrator. "They was that put to," she added, "to hide it. They was ashamed to have their kin an' frien's away from here know it, an' then 'long comes Mr. Keyser here and bought all their driedup old medders for his factories, an' give their husbands and sons good places to make stiddy incomes an' yet have somethin' left over, too, an' every last livin' one of 'em sneaked off an' bought furniture that looks just the same. They've had it some time now, foolin' all their kinfolks. A course I knowed all about it. I seen the old go out and I seen the new come in. Yessir! Yessir! If Mis' Keyser'd only asked me I could a told her all about You kin imagine how they felt about their old furniture when they put out good money for the new. An' Mr. Keyser, they don't really hate you, though they're a bit hard on Mis' Keyser; but you see, they was used to bein' first here always, an' now you are. Yessir! Yessir!'

Keyser's face was a study as he turned back into the room and to his wife. He shut the door softly.

"Poor little chipmunks!" he said, the pathos of it appealing to him as he sat down beside his wife. "Poor little chipmunks! They are such quiet, brown little ladies, they always make me think of those busy, sly little things. They are sly."

His lips curved amusedly; and then, memory pictured that shadow of anguish which had swept over their faces as they stood in his office and heard his allusion to their treasured ancestral belongings, and he added:

"They must never know that we know. We must keep their secret."

"Keep their secret! Why, what do you mean? Be a partner to a lie? Indeed I shall do nothing of the kind. If that furniture is exhibited it shall have a card attached, upon which is printed in large, clear letters: 'Modern reproduction of old furniture once owned by Mrs. —""

"Oh, no!" protested Keyser. "You insisted. You and I forced these people

to contribute to our show. They did not want to."

"But they did contribute, and they concealed the truth. A lie is a lie whether told or acted, and they must suffer the consequences. I, at least, shall be true."

Keyser looked long and meditatively at his wife. He was gaining new light on feminine motives and impulses. Doubtless that furniture had acquired to those women something more than its value as they realized the sorrow of a lost possession. He rose and stood with his arm on the mantel-shelf as he said conclusively, definitely:

"We must neither of us ever speak of this matter; and we must keep the secret which is in our hands and at our mercy. I got that furniture, and I consider myself responsible for its protection. I do not wish you to change any of your plans."

"They will think that I do not know any better," she protested. "And do you suppose those women on the committee will not find out that it is imitation? Besides, they have only contributed the furniture. They will not let me have another thing; none of the silver or china or any of the belongings of which their houses are full."

"Merely the pound of flesh, no drop of blood to be shed!" mused Keyser as a whimsical, sympathetic smile twisted his mouth to amused, indulgent laughter.

"I am at the head of the committee. I have the say about this matter," asserted Mrs. Keyser obstinately.

"Well, we'll go off the committees," retorted Keyser, with some insistence "We have no right to be and force. on them, anyhow." Then he sat down beside his wife and took her hands in his. "It isn't a question of you or me, or your reputation as an authority on old furniture; it's the chipmunks." laughed a trifle unsteadily. "It's their pride. It was their secret. We found it out against their will. We must protect them. Good Heavens! How they must have hated all this talk about the Loan Exhibition! How they must have hated us!"

The next morning Keyser took his big touring-car and went out alone. He stopped at the home of the nearest

chipmunk.

"I just came up to thank you," he said, "for helping us out so well. We are delighted to have the furniture, and I am coming up this afternoon, if you will let me, to superintend the removal of it myself." Then Keyser threw himself, openly, shamelessly on her hands, appealing to that deepest feminine instinct which rises to succor, to save, in man's helplessness and need. "But I wish that you older ladies here, who know so much more than we do how these things ought to be set up and arranged, would take this affair in hand. You have an interest in your furniture and know how to place it advantageously; and we do not. Mrs. Keyser, you see, is young, and there ought to be women of more experience at the head of things. We need your advice. would be a great thing if you would come out and help us. Look here! Let me drive you around to your friends, and you talk to them and ask them to come down and take the Loan Exhibition in charge and make it a success. Better still, let's get them all in the machine and go for a little drive while we talk it over."

Keyser knew that he had secured his point as he saw her face. She ran off to get her bonnet. She had never been in an automobile in her life. None of the chipmunks had. It was an occa-

sion for excitement.

At the end of the home-coming week, a group of quiet, reserved, middle-aged little women stood in a row and received the townspeople and their guests at a reception at Keyser's; and Mrs. Keyser, with that buoyantly, patronizingly and effusively condescending manner which was all her own, presented the guests to them.

One distinguished son of the town said to them as he stood before them:

"I cannot tell you how delighted I am with the Loan Exhibition. I thought I knew the ins and outs of every house in Newton as a boy, but I had no idea you could muster such an array of handsome old furniture, and silver, and china, and portraits. It is a revelation to me and most interesting."

Keyser, standing just at hand, turned hastily, as he felt rather than saw an expression of sarcastic mirth pass over each face. It melted into an inscrutable smile as one of them said:

"We must not claim the credit of the Loan Exhibition. That was Mrs. Key-

ser's idea."

But Mrs. Keyser could not accept the tainted coin of these amenities; she had not yet learned to value bargains or to barter and sell across the social counter.

"Mr. Keyser's idea," she corrected, adding with definite emphasis and in her most complacent and convincing manner: "My exhibition would have presented merely some very ordinary

furniture."

Keyser's face was not pleasant to look at. Most men would have known how to read it; few women would have dared to; but his thought was fixed upon the changing smile on the faces of that group of women. It reminded him of an indeterminate sentence hanging over a criminal.







HE room in which the Marshes had been quarreling was the parlor of that suite which they had taken a year ago in the first delicious flush of Jeff's success. They

had selected a hotel where they got plenty of gilding for their money, plenty of mirrors to reflect their new magnificence. But their present occupation, quite aside from the fact that they had been tearing each other's heart for hours, was not so grandiose as their surroundings; the costumer who had promised Jeff's riding-breeches for the special matinée had failed to produce them, and Mrs. Marsh, she that had once been Marie Mabella, was on her knees before Jeff's tall and passive figure fitting an old pair of street trousers into substitutes.

It was he who, as she paused to knot her thread, broke the silence between them with a phraseology shaken into his mouth by the violent crisis, and suggestive of their ingenuous past rather than of his enlightened present.

"I don't want you should do these things for me when you feel this way about me."

"Do they blouse enough? Or ought the tight part to run a little higher?" Thus she put aside this want that he expressed; the time for considering his pleasure was past, but she had not yet fully conceived the future in which she must let him go on the stage with a bad make-up.

He submitted to her, standing motionless as she sat back on her heels to study the trousers, his handsome curly head well up and his immense dark eyes gazing straight ahead; it was in something of this attitude, though with a more humorous expression, that the photograph had been taken of which four thousand copies had been sold directly after his first appearance in "Rodman's Wife."

Marsh's wife, her utterance impeded both by the pins in her mouth and by the sobbing strain of her breath, now said to him:

"I don't want any divorce, on the children's account, and I don't want any scandal, anything that's going to hurt your—your position in society. I'll just go home like—turn a little—like I was visiting, only I'll stay. Nobody'll notice. I couldn't keep much quieter, more out of your life than I've done lately. Step off a step. There, you'll have to have them pressed, that's all." She leaned close to him to fasten her thread, she snapped it away, and then suddenly she straightened up staring into his face and clutched his arm. "Oh, what made you do it?" she gasped.

He broke away from her with a stumbling oath of impassioned helplessness, and she heard the bedroom door close after him. She remained huddled back on her heels upon the floor, her throat and her very full soft mouth dryly shuddering.

It was yesterday that she had found out about that woman, but Jeff had not come from the quarterly "Antic" at his actors' club until six this morning, and Mamie was now exhausted by both the waiting and the quarrel.

When she finally got to her feet she swayed a little and it seemed as if she could hardly creep over to the window, and rest her head on the frost of its pane. Even there, at her own window, she was confronted by a bill-board across the street:

#### NELSON HOBART PRESENTS

# MISS JANE ASCHAM

### SUPPORTED BY

# MR. JEFFERSON MARSH

The letter c in the word Ascham was hidden by the figure of a man who leaned against it, but the poster ended in a big portrait of the star, and this was so directly opposite that the two women seemed to face, to challenge each other; Jane Ascham, the society actress, the expounder of Ibsen and Sudermann, immaculate martyr to the publicity of an art which she strove to reform, and Marie Mabella, the Western soubrette.

Jane Ascham and Marie Mabella, well, well! It was inevitably Mamie who drew back; she had never pretended to compete with such stylishness, such refinement, with the elegance of a lady who was advertised as being at home equally with the four hundred and with foreign writers; Mamie was still dazzled by Jeff's superiority, shown in his quick affiliation with such high life after the barely kidgloved melodrama in which he had first bowled over Broadway. But though she could serve her husband, she could not fight for him; she was at least enough of a lady for that. Mamie gave

Jeff came into the room again with his hat and coat on; he had an empty suit-case in his hand, and he stopped to put the riding-breeches into it. She did not signal him to any leave-taking, but when his hand was on the door she

said:

"Will you send Parker for your things?"

"My things?"

"Yes, you can't come back here, you know."

"Oh, I gave him a day off—for a funeral. But I'll send somebody."

"Well."

He turned suddenly and looked at her, very white and grim, and with his square jaw closing like a trap.

"I'm sorry," he said, "to give you any more trouble, but you're mistaken about this—this isn't going to be any friendly separation. I won't let you go. I won't let you take my children and—everything, without fighting every step. You'll have to get a divorce, and you'll have to fight for it."

"So that you can marry Jane As-

cham!" she cried.

He looked at her for a moment, so darkly, so fixedly, that it seemed that he must have some weapon ready. But he had none, nor any shield, nor argument; the case was in her hand.

"Fight it then if you think you can!" she cried in a high voice of shaking triumph, and at that he opened the door

and went.

So many times before she had seen him go out of that door, had heard him with his long, strong step go down the hall, it didn't seem possible that he had gone this time for good. Not coming back at all—never; not see him again—forever!

Mamie stood there staring at the door, with something rising in her, straining and distending her whole being as the beginning of a scream seems to distend and crack the heart of the screamer. She had come to the end of the things that had kept her up, to the end of reproach, of waiting, of the struggle to free herself, to express herself, to avenge herself, and oh, for something to hold on to, to think about, to keep her head above water! Mamie, who had always been so busy, who knew of no resources except help and service, cast crazily about her for something to do, and it was the plentiful disorder of Jeff's things which rescued her.

It seemed only natural that she should get them ready; yet, before she moved from the window, she cast a glance into the freezing street; the man leaning against Jane Ascham's bill-board had shifted from the c to the a, and was staring very fixedly at Mamie's vindow; that was all that had hap-

Jeff must have gone out by the other intrance, for the sake of the tailor's shop. With a start she realized that she had looked out in the hope of a last sight of him! She went quickly into the bedroom, and telephoned to have

his trunks brought up.

She was a little creature who worked like a beaver, and by noon the caverns of two trunks gaped in ordered desolation; the only thing that showed the strain in her was that every now and then she stopped as if she were waiting for something, listened as if for something coming, went to the window and looked out before she realized again

the empty world.

This time the man in the street had begun to walk up and down, and now Mamie's eyes followed his restless animal prowl with a kind of interest; what had he been staring at her windows for? He was perceptibly an actor, though of a type rare in life, but familiar in legend-a thin, flaunting, seedy figure with longish hair, shabby soft hat, and a weary, worthless, disreputable theatricalism of aspect. class was peculiarly distasteful Mamie, whose chief pride in Jeff had always been that he was such a gentleman. Nevertheless, she felt pitiful to this creature; he looked so hungry somehow. The man caught her eye, and stared at her so brazenly that she instinctively drew back, but in the glance it seemed as if his face were familiar to her

This was an impression which remained with her all the while that she was sorting odds and ends for a top tray. There was something so compelling in that man's eye that she could not shake it off, and what, at any rate, was this memory which grew and loomed upon her—the lighted stage, the small dark figure commanding everything? "Hamlet"—King Le Roy as Hamlet—King Le Roy—that was

who it was!

Good Heaven! Why, before their marriage, Jeff used to play Rosencrantz or Guildernstern with him—how many

years ago! He had been of such promise, out there on the coast, everybody had been wild about him, women especially; and then he hadn't got any further, somehow, and then they said that he drank, and now he had been

down and out for years.

How fearfully sick he looked! Watching their windows—for Jeff, of course! Waiting for Jeff to borrow money from him as people were always doing—King Le Roy! Mamie wondered if she couldn't lend him some. She went to the window again, but he was gone; it was after one o'clock now, and knowing that Jeff must be at the theater; perhaps he had followed him there. Mamie wished that she could have done something for Le Roy.

When the clock struck the half-hour after two, she had packed practically everything except an old discarded coat of Jeff's, which she began instinctively to shake and fold. He used to wrap her in that coat in the cold coaches of early jumps; at the poker parties in their room after the performance, when the whisky-bottle was on the table between the boys and the soap-dish was emptied for an ash-tray, she used to get naps on the foot of the bed with that old coat over her; the pockets still bulged from the beer-bottles and bags of fried oysters which he used to bring home in them a year ago. The coat hung heavy in her grasp—a year ago!

Mamie thrust her hands deep into the shapeless pockets, she drew the coat into her breast, and suddenly, with a great shudder, she began to weep. Oh, he had taken everything, even the past, poisoned it, all her memories—killed them! She had nothing left—nothing at all! If only he hadn't taken away her love—why, if he had died there would have been something left—but now! Nothing, not death even could

give him back to her now.

Yet, wasn't there some way, some miracle? No, not one. And immediately there began in her again the old appeals, the terrible trick-phrases, the eternal catchwords of the heart: "Oh, how could he treat me like this? I loved him so. I did everything for

him. What more did he want? He did love me once. Well, I'm done with him. I'm done with him. What shall I do without him? How could he? I loved him so!"

Over and over, over and over, the endless heart-sickening seesaw, which one idea was oftenest on top: "I could have borne it if he had died."

Something made her drop the coat, stand up straight, and cover her face. Without any warning the door had swung open, and King Le Roy stood on

the threshold.

The sensationalism of this entrance hardly reached to Mamie's mind; she stood quietly drying her eyes before the swaggering insolence with which he said: "These are Mr. Jefferson Marsh's rooms, I believe."

"They were Mr. Marsh's rooms. Mr.

Marsh is not here now."

"Indeed! And when do you expect

"I don't expect him at all, but-" He gave a little moaning cry, and his theatrical leer crumbled to dust. "Oh!" he besought her. "I missed him in the street. I was sure he would be heresoon."

"You'll find him in the theater," she

volunteered.

"The theater—oh, yes—of course—I

forgot-I forgot."

The despairing lurch with which he turned away was too much for Mamie. "Oh, but won't you come in a while?" She ran forward and put a hand on his arm. "Mr. Le Roy, wait! Sit down a minute."

He sank into the chair that she drew forward, and she confronted his bowed shivering form with less sense of the fact that he had probably been drinking than of the childish greed with which his shaking body seemed to draw into itself the rest, the warmth, the shelter from the street.

"Won't you tell me what you wanted

of Mr. Marsh?"

"If this is a trap, you know," he said, "it makes no manner of difference. It's warm here. I haven't been warm this winter. That's what makes me know that it's not fever. But, mind you, if the truth were known-do I look queer?"

"I didn't mean to stare," said Mamie. "What was it you wanted of Mr. Marsh?"

"What's that to you?"

"Maybe I could get it for you. Look here, Mr. Le Roy, you're an old friend of his and from out home. You know how awfully hard up we've often been ourselves, so now-did you want Mr. Marsh to lend you some money?'

"Money?" he said stupidly.

not money exactly."

"Oh! Because I could let you have

some. I've got plenty."
"Have you?" he responded, with a vague politeness. Suddenly he stiffened and a shudder ran over him. "Merciful heavens, can't you get me a drink then?"

She hesitated, and he began to beg her for it, to tell her that he was cold and dying for it, and suddenly he exclaimed: "You think I'm crazy."

"I think you've been drinking," said

Mamie frankly.

"Well, then, you want to remember afterward that I was no more crazy than you are. I missed him in the street, you see, that's simple enough, isn't it? I missed him in the street. It was the other one was with her, after all. Just as well. But I don't know now which one-which one. What are you to Jefferson Marsh?"

"I—I'm his wife. You don't remember about me, Mr. Le Roy?"

He drew back from her, his mouth and eyes opening round and wide, and if before this she had thought him pale it now seemed impossible that there could be any blood in him.

"My God!" he breathed. "Oh, my God, has he got a wife? And why not? They're all alike, the whole damned Judas crew! They're every one of them alike! Why not? See here, he's wronged you, you know. We're both in the same boat, I suppose you can see that.'

"Do you mean that Mr. Marsh has

done you any harm?"

"But still," persisted Le Roy, deaf to Mamie's words, "he never denied your marriage, did he, because it was secret and he thought he could? He might have-

'I should think not!" said Mamie in-

dignantly. "It wasn't secret."

She did that to me; got me to keep it quiet on account of her career, and then denied me, threw me over when I was out of luck, without a penny, when I was ready to kiss her little feet, her little feet! She did that because he told her to, he taught her to treat me like that-for business reasons, he said. When I got well again I came East. I tried to see her. I followed her, I wrote to her, I tried to see her. She set the police on me, and all the time- Well, anyhow, the idols, you know, the idols are broke in the temple of- What's the matter with you?"

"Do you mean Miss Ascham?" she asked him painfully. "Is that who you mean? And—Mr. Marsh?"

"Jefferson Marsh-yes, him, too, and I missed him in the street! I missed him-I mean-but it was her manager who taught her to treat-

A door banged somewhere down the hall, and Jane Ascham's husband leaped up with a shriek. "What was

that?"

"A door banged."

He stood there trembling and clinging to the chair, then he drooped down, and covering his face with his hands began to sob. He again asked her for a drink, and she did not see how to refuse. After all, it might be the best thing for him. What in the world could she do with him? She thought of all this rather absently as she went into the bedroom and, since their whisky had run short, ordered him a drink through the telephone. When she reentered the parlor he was gone.

On that brief winter afternoon the halls of the hotel were already growing dark, so that it did not surprise Mamie, as she peered up and down them, to find no trace of her strange guest in their dim gulfs; the whole day had been of such a quality of nightmare that it was also without surprise, but with a certain sickness that she saw growing out of the shadows, advancing

upon her, the figures of three men of whom the foremost was her husband.

He was almost running, and when he caught sight of her he called out: "Are

you all right?"

She did not answer, and the three figures bore down upon her swiftly; then they were in the room with her; they had closed the door; they were all asking her questions to which she did not listen. She kept her eyes fixed on her husband who had cast one look about the room, one more at her, and now stood stiffly against the door. How could he come back again? How could he? What did he think of her when he did such a thing? And did he know yet about Jane Ascham's husband?

She was roused by one of the men asking her for the third time: "You

seen anybody?"

"Seen anybody?" she said stupidly. "Who?" She looked from one man to the other, and was startled by the same tension in all of them, the same controlled violence. "Something's hap-

"Yes," said the man. "There's been -well, an accident, a bad accident. Your husband was afraid you might be hurt-or scared. In case a certain party had been here that expected to find Mr. Marsh. At least, it was-an

attempt was made-

"Mamie," said Jeff, "Miss Ascham was shot this afternoon while she was getting out of her motor at the stagedoor. The bullet struck across her face, that's all. It will leave a bad scar, she keeps saying. The man who did it got away. There is reason to think he was a man we used to know—King Le Roy. These gentlemen-they're officerswant to know if he's been here."

"Do they?" flashed through Mamie's mind. "Why should I tell them?" She was facing the incarnate law, but what she saw was the thin figure, half fainting in the chair; opposing him was Jane Ascham, who had robbed both him and her. "But it wasn't serious?" she questioned. "Only a scratch?"

The officer drew a whistling breath. "Only a scratch for the lady.

Mr. Marsh wanted to spare you the shock of was about Mr. Hobart, the manager. He was in the motor with her. He was hit by two bullets, and they say, in all probability he's dying."

Mamie gave a cry and drew back. "Oh, what makes you think it was Le Roy?" she asked, and put her hands

over her eyes.

"Miss Ascham and Mr. Hobart sent in a complaint against him some days ago, a crank who's been annoying her. And when Mr. Marsh called on her this morning"-Mamie's eyes met Jeff's. This morning! Straight from their last good-by! Straight from all that had just been between them he had gone to her! Her children's father! Oh, men! What were they made of? -"she told him she had had a letter threatening him, too, and after the shooting Mr. Marsh remembered he had seen a man resembling this Le Roy hanging outside the hotel when he came in early this morning. He was afraid the fellow had maybe come up and raised a row with you. Had he?"

"But the harm's all done," said

Mamie coldly. "Isn't it?"

"Done! Not if he catches your husband. He'll probably do for him all right!" cried the officer. "Sorry, Mr. Marsh; I had to make her see it.'

Well, they had made her see it; they had beaten her; this last little bit of loyalty Jeff had taken from her as he had taken everything. She told them: "He was here, but he's gone. I don't know where. He left while I was in the other room. I was looking for him when you came."

She raised her eyes to Jeff that they might say: "Go on! Hurry back! You're safe now. Go to that woman.' And she believed that he read this message, read it across a material, an actual abyss. The heat of their passion was turning into stone; it was as if there were a death between them.

"Mr. Jefferson Marsh," began the

officer.

"Mr. Jefferson Marsh!" a voice repeated.

They all turned, gaping, to the

threshold of the bedroom, where in the now open door Jane Ascham's husband stood smiling on them. He must have followed Mamie, and hidden there while she was telephoning; his face was one white flash of triumph, and his little figure seemed to tower over them all.

"I missed you in the street, I think," he said to Jeff, and he lifted a hand in which, in the half-light, something

glittered.

As he fired he cried out, but Mamie's cry rang above his; she sprang forward, swifter than the shot, and threw herself upon her husband; in the bullet's flash, she had turned herself into Jeff's shield, she was stretching out her arms as wide as she could; she was straining upward to be tall, to hide him, to cover him, and with all her strength she tried to draw him down to her, to the shelter of her body between him and death, so that the dear head should be hidden in her breast and the dear face safe and close against her own.

With her eyes pressed against his coat she could not see the little splatter of plaster which followed the shot; the darkness seemed to make a world for the two of them no bigger than her encircling arms, and thus, for that single instant, the miracle was wrought; for one little moment she had him back, him and love, he was all hers again, all hers, all hers, before she had lost him again, before she felt him put her aside as he had done before, leave her alone with her arms empty, and spring into the midst of the scuffle. She put her hands over her eyes, but she heard Le Roy's last shot as Jeff struck up his pistol, then a crashing thud, and then a gasp, and people running up the hall, and Jeff's voice saying:

"Easy with him now. He's sick, don't you see? He's sick and starving;

he's out of his head.'

It seemed a very long time after the police had gone that Mamie was roused by Jeff's voice speaking to

"You know I told you, Mamie," he said, "that you'd have to fight for that divorce." She didn't answer, and he added: "How hard do you think you'll

have to fight for it now?"

She had a nervous dread of his saying something more directly grateful, but he only came suddenly round before her, and motioned to a chair that faced hers.

"May I sit down? I've stayed to talk

things over.'

Though his manner was very deliberate and he sat leaning forward with his elbows on his knees, he still kept on his overcoat and turned his soft hat between his hands. Thus he recognized her as the stranger mistress of the place.

"To start with," he began, "you know, of course, that—it's—all off."

"You mean-her?"

"Yes. This morning before she started out. For good and all. For good."

Silence fell again, heavy with bitter memories. Then he started afresh.

"That's something, at least, that we've had it out about. You know all that and it's that you can't forgive. But to my way of thinking that wasn't the worst I treated you to; it's not that anyhow I want you to know and understand. I want you to see what was the matter with me all along, at the root of everything, so that if you can make out perhaps any hope for us, it'll be on bed-rock this time.

"Mamie, the worst of it is that it wasn't that kind of thing, it wasn't any big sweeping fancy for another woman; it was just—Broadway, the clubs, the new things, the swell things, the ways you didn't like, the ways I took to like breathing—it was such a mess as that that came between us.

"At first when you didn't catch on to the differences, the way people did things here, I only minded it for you, the false impression you made, the way other women, not near so bright nor with half your natural looks, got in ahead of you, because they knew the ropes; and you were always pushed to one side when I wanted to be so proud of you!

"Then I began to think you were

pretty slow, then I said: 'What's the matter with her anyhow? What possesses her? It's simple enough to do this, and not to say the other.' And it seemed too ridiculous that you wouldn't study it out, and not always do the queer thing, the thing nobody else did; it seemed just meanness, stubbornness,

"Then I began to come the condescending gag, the paternal act. I was all for pitying 'the poor little soul'—as if I was a perfect holy Moses of quiet elegance myself! From pitying you it wasn't far to pitying me, to seeing myself as the refined fellow, the brainy fellow, whose wife doesn't understand him, doesn't appreciate him. Once a man gets hold of that notion, it just soaks the rottenness into him; it takes all the bones out of him, if you know what I mean.

"So I began to go out without you. I toted this brilliant, temperamental, intellectual Apollo-Belvidere young actor, this fellow with the stunted home life, everywhere where he could get his head patted, and every time it got patted, it

swelled.

"You interfered with my swallowing quite all of it. I couldn't let on to myself that I was the real thing, and this my native heath, because there was somebody waiting at home for me who knew darned well it wasn't!"

Mamie sat silent, hardly breathing; neither of them looked at each other and he had ceased even the little mo-

tion with his hat.

When he went on again, it was with rather a lifeless monotony of voice.

"Well, that's how it was with me. I don't know if I've hurt you to death trying to show you how rotten I was, and for what it really was that I treated you so—not even a woman, dear Lord! But it had to be cleared between us now, for you to choose.

"Of course, as for love, why, I've loved you all along, only now I've found you. Maybe I didn't know what you were like before, but now I know. For it was you saved me. Twice just now, when that fellow turned his gun on me, and then this morning when you turned me out. You turned me out

into the world, into what was left of my life, what was left of it.

He straightened up with a long breath, but if he expected her to move or speak or even to catch his eye, he was disappointed. She gave no sign as to what he had taken her through, what, if anything, he had made plain to her. He dropped his chin on his hand again for the pondering of his

last words.

"So you see, Mamie, Mamie girl, you see how it is with us. It was when we were poor and in a lot of little troubles that we loved each other best, and it took trouble, disgrace too, to teach me over again, and danger, yes, of death to give you courage to come back, to follow your heart the whole way—all the way to me. Those are the things, I guess, love grows on.

"It's like a miracle what's happened to us to-day, and other people have had to suffer for it, too. Why, it's like a child come to us out of so much that's dangerous and dark! What are we going to do with it? Do you think we ought to go back on it, run away from it? It seems to me that in this town and before these people where I threw my name and heart out common into the mud, what ought to be is for me to pick them up again, me and—you. Could you? There's happiness that way, I'm sure, if we don't think too much about being happy. Anyway, there's a life for us. Say, dear, what do you say?"

Her eyes alone moved here and there, as if they sought in the recesses of that room to which he had brought her when she was so happy, some reassuring images; they met only the illusions of her youth—her youth, which she had lived through and worn out with him, and which he had now stripped so bare of its gallantries and graces and pet imaginings that she could only fold it away like some old dancing dress which had grown shabby in his service.

And she felt rising in her full blood that deeper tide—which, if she should commit herself to it again, must take all of her, her whole life, future, sense, and soul into the keeping of its terrible pro-

fundity.

The light that was born in her face glimmered brokenly and trembled into tears. Looking past Jeff into the dusk, "It's not exactly like a child, either, is it?" she asked him.

At that he came close to her with a little cry. "Oh, Mamie, no! I know! Don't—but if only you could—if only

you'd been-willing!"

She put up one hand to touch his sleeve, then her fingers gripped it, and she said: "I'm willing."







HEN finally I caught up with Johnnie—
Johnnie I still call him, though he is six feet two, has a ruddy little mustache on his upper lip, and though his real name would

take up at least two lines of this page—I was in Manila. From England to the Philippines is a long chase after a boy who is not your son—I wish Johnnie were—and I see right here that I must out with the most difficult admission of this tale, which in itself is al-

most a confession.

The interest which I take in Johnnie. besides the fact that he is a fine. straight, manly boy interesting in himself, comes from the interest which I take in his mother, God bless her! I I have loved his love his mother. mother twenty years. Twenty years ago -yes, that long-we found that we loved each other, and we found it out too late; she was married then-to Johnnie's father. And during these twenty years we have done the right, the respectable thing. To this love that runs like an undercurrent of music, of solemn music tenderly close to tears, beneath our every thought, our every act, we have never given expression in word or gesture. Corseleted in iron repression, we have rigidly kept to the duty we owed to God, to man, to ourselves-and to Johnnie.

Well, I travel much. Having no hearth, I have no peace; and I travel. But at the end of each voyage, I come to throw my homage at the feet of Johnnie's mother, and to put myself at

her service.

She had something for me this time. As usual, it concerned Johnnie,

You see, Johnnie belongs to that élite of his country upon which devolves public service. He will be a peer some day. And being an intelligent lad, full of serious ambition, he has made up his mind to prepare himself thoroughly for his rôle. He has decided to specialize on colonial affairs, and in pursuance of this plan he had left six months before for a voyage of investigation which was to take him through all the possessions of the empire.

Well, it had been understood that he was to remain in Bombay six months. But his letters, his mother now told me, showed him leaving Bombay after a bare three weeks, skipping to Calcutta, then, with a rapidity of motion incompatible with a serious study of colonial administrations, successively to Bangkok, Singapore, Saigon—fancy studying a French colonial system!—and Hong-

kong.

The character of these letters, moreover, had disquieted her. They were brief and vague with the briefness and vagueness of one who has an absorbing interest in something—something else than his letters—and they soared here and there with a mystic idealism that caused one with a knowledge of life, such as we had, she and I, to smile and fear at once.

She sat in a high-backed chair as she told me this, amid the bluish shadows of the darkened room; and a last glint of the dying day, passing between the curtains, caressed her head which of late had become quite gray, ensilvered with a fine austerity. She leaned

slightly toward me.

"You will go, my friend, will you not?" she said.

And of course I went.

I followed in the tracks of the young scapegrace from Bombay to Calcutta, from Calcutta to Bangkok, from Bangkok to Singapore, to Saigon, stopping but a few hours in each place and staying on the same steamer, and when I arrived in Hongkong he was not there. He had gone across to Manila.

I went across, too-on a measly tinpot steamer that turned me inside out. When I landed on the quays of the Pasig, it was an hour after sundown, and I took a cab and drove straightaway to the hotel. Sure enough, a week old on the register, there was Johnnie's autograph—he was using his little name, John Perceval. I asked if The man behind the desk he was in. turned to his assistant questioningly.

"Has he gone this evening?" he asked.

"Yes, as usual," answered the assist-

"Do you know where?" I questioned. "He goes to the theater every evening," answered this well-informed

young man.

I went right out there, after a hasty meal and change of dress. The performance was well on when I reached the place, and I groped my way to my seat in darkness. And when, finally settled, I looked up at the stage, I thought myself the victim of a hallucination. There, near the footlights, in the center, was a young woman all in red, from small red slipper through hose, skirt, waist and cape, and with a black cocked hat set upon an opulent blond wig. She was dancing; and just as I looked, she was poised motionless, just like a snap-photograph caught by a kodak, on one foot, the other foot being up, its wee needle of toe pointing straight up into the flies.

Now, the first thing that had confronted me in Bombay when I had landed had been a poster representing a young woman all in red, poised on one toe while the other pointed steadily up into the turquoise sky; in Calcutta the same picture had met my eye; it had welcomed me in Singapore; Saigon had fairly flamed with it; and in Hongkong the doors of the Queen's Theater had been flanked with twin red ladies

of uplifted toe.

So, here, for a moment, I feared that my eye was carrying, fixed for ever on its impressionable retina, the accumulated vision of these posters. There she was-red slipper, red hose, red skirt, red waist, red cape, red feather, poised delicately on one toe, pointing to heaven in a gesture without sanctity!

This but for a second, though. soaring limb floated back gracefully to the boards; she turned like a top and slid from one end of the stage to the other in dance. It was Mademoiselle Ivette herself. I had caught up with

her, also!

She disappeared into the wings; the lights went out; and suddenly she floated in again, an undulation of liquid flame. She waved diaphanous draperies over which fantastic colors passed like shivering caresses-ambers, opalescences, flames, iridescences, sunset glows, and spectral lights of somber seas. I had seen the dance in Paris, but never better.

Out of this she sprang into the brilliance of footlights raised again, clad as a Trianon shepherdess, with widebrimmed straw-hat cascading with daisies, a beribboned staff in hand, and danced a gentle pastoral. Out she went again, and when she returned she was in a long black gown, black-gloved to her bare shoulders, and thus, without a gesture, very solemnly, she told us with her lisping French accent a story which I am afraid was naughty.

This was the end. A thunder of applause shook the building-and I found Johnnie. I found him by tracing back the long parabola of a bouquet—a splendid bouquet, big as a cabbage !--which had landed at the feet of Mademoiselle Ivette. He was standing in his stall, leaning forward as though he were about to spring upon the stage, a very flushed and excited young Briton, fairly splitting his palms with clapping.

I glanced at the program, found it

unpromising, and went out to smoke a cigar and plan my attack upon Johnnie. On the broad avenue a coquettish little victoria was wheeling back and forth, back and forth, behind two sleek, slender-limbed Australian ponies. My cigar was about two-thirds gone when I saw the coachman—a native, who looked like a circus monkey in his cockaded tall hat, brass-buttoned frock, and patent-leather boots-give a glance at the entrance, stiffen up, and gather his reins. I flattened myself against the wall. Prancing mincingly, the ponies turned, and the toy-vehicle came rolling to the sidewalk.

Sure enough, there was Johnnie, very handsome in his white shell-back jacket. He was standing at a small door in the side of the entrance-hall, holding it open, his fine, elastic body bent in a posture that struck me as the acme of chivalrous deference. He stood thus a little while, then a figure like a pastel filled the door-frame, detached itself from it and came down the hall at his side. It passed close. I caught a rustling of silks, a breeze of ruffles, a discreet fragrance of violet. A drooping feather slid across my nose; I almost sneezed.

It was Mademoiselle Ivette—oh, yes; no one else. Johnnie handed her into the carriage, still with that tremendously respectful manner, at once beautiful and very naive, and sprang to her side. The coachman flicked his horses with the tip of his whip, and the victoria rolled off elastically down the street, leaving me there alone with contradictory emotions.

I wanted to be indignant and contemptuous, and I could not—quite. Upon my soul, I almost admired the disreputable young beggar!

My sense of duty returned soon, however, at the thought of his mother, back there in England. After roaming the streets for two hours, I returned to the hotel, and without any preliminaries pounced upon him.

It was past midnight, but I found him up, sitting with back-tilted chair at his open window, his eyes dreamy upon the stars—a sentimental youngster, and very proud of it, too, I'll wager! I struck him like a typhoon.

He listened to me quietly, his face very pale, his blue eyes very wide, and when I was through he said, with a very shocked expression and a gulping in his throat:

"Good God, Richard, you don't understand; you don't understand; you don't understand; you don't know her. Why, you're—you're"—his eyes darkened—"you're blaspheming, that's what you are; blaspheming! I mean to—why, damn you!" he broke out in aroused anger, and his eyes shot out blue flame, I tell you! "Why, I'm to marry her, Richard, marry her, do you understand? She's to be my wife! And I beg you, sir, to consider her so from this moment! And to remember, sir, that as such it is my bounden duty to defend her, sir, from any such vile imputation as you, sir, have had the madness—I use the mildest term—to cast upon her just now!"

You should have heard those "sirs"; slow and rasping and deadly! I didn't like them at all! And his face was set like marble, just like marble. Oh, yes, there was no doubt that I had gone off wrong.

So, very gently and carefully, refraining from naming her at all-poor boy, he fairly shriveled whenever the talk seemed to lead to a mention of her -I explained from A to Z the impossibility of his mad project. I reminded him of his position in society, which demanded of him inexorably certain sacrifices; I spoke of his long line of ancestors, distinguished nearly all, respectable all, servitors of their sovereign in war and peace, and of what he owed to them; I spoke of his ambition, and of what he owed to that; one by one I pointed out to him the threads that held him, the threads that hold us all, the threads, thin, invisible, but innumerable and infinitely strong that bind us, body, hand, foot, finger, as Gulliver was bound by the Lilliputians, that bind us, we who think we are free, in cocoons, like so many larvæ.

When I had finished he sprang to his feet, raised his hands up and out in a brusk movement, as if to snap all these

odious little threads-he was young; he

thought he could do it—and said:
"I love her, Richard. What's all this bally rot you're telling me? I love her, I tell you!"

Then I spoke to him of his mother. I told him about his mother and my-

He put his hand on my shoulder. beg your pardon, Richard," he said. "I should not be impatient with you." His eyes filled with tears. "Poor mother!" he said.

For a time he was silent, evidently downcast. Then that blooming robust optimism of his again rose through him

like a wave.

"I know what is the matter," he said, a-thrill with his new thought. "You have not seen her yet; you don't know Ivette, that's what's the matter. Everything will be all right as soon as you know her. Go and see her." He began to push me toward the door. "Go and see her, Richard. She's an angel; fit to grace a throne. Go and see her."

I said I would, for I saw that it was there I must make the fight. And so I left things just about where they were when I had begun. But not quite; as I closed the door he was not mooning at the window as when I had found He was pacing to and fro, his arms joined, tense, behind him, his shoulders twitching with brusk freeing movements. He was feeling the threads.

I went to call on Mademoiselle Ivette the following afternoon. She had been up not very long, and received me in a fluffy and belaced garment, in which, I must admit, she looked very charming, in spite of the corrosions of stage-cosmetic which made of her visage that of a child precociously aged. She received me with a certain dignity, a little overdone, to be sure, as such things usually are by people of the boards.

I sprang right into the breach. She looked at me with wide innocent eyes, and, with an ingenuousness that was

well simulated, she said:

"And may I demand of monsieur from what springs this remarkable interest he takes in the young man?"

I told her that I had known him a long time.

"And you have a right of guidance of his actions-and mine?" she kept on suavely, pushing her advantage.

I became a little muddled; said I knew his mother, had known him since a boy; stammered something vague about the general interest I took in young men; and finally blurted out that I loved the lad.

"Ah," she said, stopping me with a little gesture, and her brown eyes lit up like stars, "ah, you should have be-gun by that. You love him; that is

enough."

She turned her head and looked out of the window, upon the bay shimmering iridescently. After a time she said: "You know his mother."

I said: "Yes."

"Tell me how she looks. Has she eyes, blue, like him? And is her hair golden and does it curl at the temples? And does she have that nice, frank smile?"

I said that she had blue eves like his. just as frank and fine, that her hair, now, was silvery, and her smile some-

times a little sad.

"I would like to know her," she said. She was looking again out upon the sea. A silence had come between us at this evocation of Johnnie's mother, a silence that was a communication almost, which held melancholy-one of those dangerous silences that are so apt to lead into sentimentality. I broke the

"You must let him be," I said. "The boy-he takes it all seriously; to you it is an amusement, an amusement you

can give up."

"Amusement?" She stopped me with a look, a rapid glance which was a revelation; it was full of pain. "Amusement?" she said. "It is torture!"

Again a silence fell between us, a silence pulsing with the vehemence of her cry. I saw that I must change my method. It was so different from what I had expected, this thing! She loved him; she left no doubt as to this. She may have been a dancing-girl, a frivolous night-butterfly, perhaps a bit vicious; but there was no mistaking the misery in her eye, the enunciation of that word "torture." It was on her very passion I must rely; on the quality of her affection. Out of the depths of that love I must call forth renunciation.

So, very carefully, I explained everything; his position, the long line of ancestral honor to be sustained, his duty to his country, his family, to himself. I told her of the plans he had, the great future before him. And I showed her how all this would fail, would tumble to pieces irretrievably shattered, if—I did not mince my words—if he lost the esteem necessary to his full development by marrying beneath his station.

While I spoke she had dragged off the couch a scarf, one of those magnificent embroidered things you can get in Canton, and with one swift movement she had draped it about her.

"Look!" she said. "Station, you speak of station; I could be queen, and give splendor to the station!"

I gazed upon her, astounded. She sat there, by this slight act of throwing a scarf about her, transfigured. A haughtiness like a diadem was upon her brow, a splendor was in her eyes; her bosom heaved, and with each rise and fall conveyed a long lustrous undulation to the drapery, which crackled and threw gleams. She throned there like one of those queens of barbaric antiquity, resplendent, infinitely proud, superb, and cruel.

Then suddenly she had leaped to her feet and was pacing the room with lithe panther strides; the drapery had slipped down to her waist; at each of her turns it flew out behind like the mantle of a chariot-rider.

"Bah!" she cried. "It is just I he needs, just I! His English blood, it needs the molten metal of mine; his calm brain, the madness of mine! I would warm him, the cold Saxon! Into his veins I would breathe the furnace-heat of my fervor! I would spur him, I would hurl him onward and up, onward and up, up—up—up!" She stood in the center of the room, towering above me sitting there stupefied, her hand rising, rising, her head careening

back upon her shoulders, her eyes fixed upon the little white hand which, fluttering like a bird, continued to make sudden yearning movements—up, up, and up.

The hand fell back, slapping the thigh. "That is what I would do, Monsieur l'Anglais," she said, with an indefinable irony, "just that!" She was facing me, her breast still heaving, her eyes flashing.

I hold by nature an inveterate distrust of histrionic passion; I soon regained my balance. I had one last arrow in my quiver—a cruelly barbed one. I shot it—it had to be.

I spoke to her of her past. I asked her if she could give him what is indispensable, what man demands, and in default of which he goes mad, that highest gift which woman can give to man—herself absolutely. I asked her, cruelly I asked her—it had to be—if she had that to give.

She crumpled up like a bit of paper too near the fire. She fell across the couch; her head disappeared beneath her arms. I could see only her back, shaken at intervals with a palpitation, as if a dagger were stuck there, to the hilt, between the shoulder-blades.

It was a long time before she faced me again. And when she did she was no longer the imperial being of a few moments before; she was a very miserable little girl, with face swollen with woe and eyes humble as a dog's.

"Yes," she said, "you have come to it—the impossibility. I knew it all the time; all the time the knowledge was there, like an ache." She struck her breast with both clenched hands. "Que voulez-vous?" She shrugged her shoulders. "I am a child of the stage. My mother-she acted. Since that high, high as your knee, I have been on the boards. Brought up on the stage; on the stage all my life; that leads not to the life regular. Ah, monsieur, I have looked into his eyes; his soul is so blue and so candid. And I knew all the time that to him I could bring nothing so blue and so candid. No, I could

Poor little devil! She was so small

now, so much like a child. The great embroidered scarf lay at her feet and had ceased to lend her its stiffness, its splendor and its pride; her fine exaltation had fallen. A yearning to console her, to make her happy had me. Instead, rigid duty standing at my elbow, I said:

"You are going away."

"I shall go away," she said. "To-

morrow I shall go away."

I knew of a steamer sailing at six o'clock that very day for Hongkong. I o'clock that very day to said: "You will go this evening."

Sharp breath. Then:

"Yes; this evening I shall go away."

"I shall see you off," I said.

"You do not trust me," she objected gently.

"I do," I protested. "You will go

alone, this evening.'

"This evening," she echoed, and the

words were like a toll.

She went, that evening, and at the Paz Theater there was that night no Mademoiselle Ivette to make blood dance to her rhythm.

And at about one in the morning, I saw a disheveled young man reenter his room. He had hunted the whole town through, and held in his hand a little blue note, sole result of his search, and

was half insane.

And at dawn he was out again, haunting the steamer-offices, the pier and the docks, looking for some craft, any craft, that would take him to Hongkong. But there wasn't any; not for three days.

And when we did get to Hongkong there was there no trace of Mademoiselle Ivette; she had evaporated—phoo! -like that; not a mark of her anywhere. Only, flanking the doors of the Queen's Theater, soiled, torn, slashed by the weather, were still two red Mademoiselle Ivettes, smiling with right toes pointed to the sky.

There followed an apathy that made me very uncomfortable, lasting several days, and then without warning, I saw him, like a man coming out of a dream, rush one morning to the palace of the governor and ask the facilities that would enable him to study the administration of the possession. He was

I left him there and returned to England to lay at the feet of his mother the result of my mission. She sat, just as when I had left her, you remember, in a high-backed chair placed in the shadow; a shaft of light fell upon her head, and that head now was no longer austerely gray. In those few months it had become white, white with a white that was very soft.

When I was through telling her she was silent for a long time. Then she leaned forward and touched my hand lightly. Her voice was like a muffled golden bell, hidden there in the shadow.

And she said: "My friend, I wonder if after all-it would not have been better-yes, I wish, somehow-I wish we could have let him be happy!"

And suddenly, at these words, the eyes of my mind looked back along the long years, the long years of respectability, of repression, of crushing. And I wondered. And it is a terrible thing, when your life is gone, when your life that you have sacrificed to a principle is gone, gone beyond recalling, it is a terrible thing then to wonder.

# COURAGE

USK, and the sweet day folding Into its sheath of grav; With one bright spear in the long East holding Night and her hosts at bay.

Dusk, and your gray eyes turning, Sad, to the less'ning day; With one clear gleam from your soul's sure burning Holding despair at bay! ISABEL ECCLESTONE MACKAY.



# AS THEY ARE





Y home is where my rugs are," said Avis airily. She had just finished tacking a silky dull-gleaming old Bokhara against the plastered wall of her sitting-room and

now stood back to view the effect.

The young man who had been unskilfully assisting allowed his eyes to drift appreciatively over the transformed wall. Then he looked back at Avis.

"Under the rug are the scratches all there just the same," he said. "In covering them up you have simply made

more holes in the plaster.'

She smiled in charming derision. It was an old subject between them. "How can you get back of the poetry and the color, the whole Arabian Nights of that rug and see the holes in the plaster?" she demanded dramatically.

"How can you help seeing them?"

he retorted.

And then they stood an instant looking at each other; he square-jawed, fair-haired, with blue eyes that held a challenge; she a lightly poised creature with blue eyes also that just now looked as dark as her soft masses of hair. He put another half-in-earnest question to her as she stood there smiling.

"Since you started out to have blue eyes," he said, "why do you half the time pretend that they are black?"

She lifted her eyebrows warningly. "In another man," she told him, "that would partake of the nature of a compliment. You are sure," anxiously, "that you are not concealing the fact that you think my eyes are pretty?"

"I am not," he returned. "Neither

are you concealing the fact that you think me considerable of an idiot, for which small step toward straightforwardness let us be thankful!"

She swept him a curtsy which did not seem at all out of place, even though she was habited in a linen shirt-waist and a walking-skirt. Then she apparently forgot him in trying the effect of a brass-laden tea-table against the Bokhara.

"Do you ever make tea?" he inquired, a new accusation in his tone.

"Never," she said promptly, a smile rising in her eyes. "I don't like it, and it is such a lot of work; but it looks pretty and hospitable to have the teatable, doesn't it?" Then she brightened to sudden interest. "I can make tea," she said. "Would you like a cup? Please don't refuse. I'd really like to make it."

"But you just said——" reprovingly, 
"What would life be without exceptions?" she cried. She was the picture of happy domesticity as she shifted the cups and drew the brass kettle toward her.

"I don't like it, either," he said conclusively.

She leaned back in her low chair, her red lips pursed together, her eyes, blue as his own, raised to his. "Then why," she inquired, "should you have looked so disapproving at my not liking it?"

He was about to explain the real grounds of his disapproval when he caught the gleam in her eyes, whereupon he flushed. He had times of realizing that his sense of humor had tripped over his principles.

"Have you heard from the New

Magazine?" he asked, dropping the subject of tea.

"Yes," she answered, "they sent it

back."

She crossed to her desk, and after considerable rummaging found a note

which she gave him.

He read and returned it. "Very polite," he commented. "They evidently liked it. But I can't quite make out what the reason is for rejecting it. The editor puts it on the public; so much is plain."

"Oh, I know what the matter is," said Avis. "Other editors have put it in other ways. You see, I found it impossible to make the hero kiss the

heroine.

He nodded comprehension. "And with all deference to the charm of your delicate style," he said, "I think the public is quite right. The man was either in love with the girl or he was not. Why not make it clear?"

"It is clear," said Avis.

He shook his head. "One feels it is a possibility; that is the most you can say. There isn't one fact you can put your finger on."

"As if one wanted to put one's fin-

ger on a fact," she protested.

"You don't, I know," he agreed.
"You painstakingly cover up any fact that you see trying to poke its head out. But the public wants to know whether your hero married that particular girl or whether he thought better of it and married a red-headed school-teacher."

"The public is so young," she sighed.
"If I were eighteen instead of twentyeight I suppose I might more easily get

the view-point."

"I thought women never told the truth about their ages," he remarked.

"They don't without a special effort. I never accomplish it without two trials. I am twenty-nine."

"I am thirty-three."

"I know it. You told me you were thirty-one the first time you spoke to me."

"Did I? Well, one gets confidential easily on shipboard. I suppose you put it down to masculine egotism or——"

"There wasn't any 'or,' " she inter-

rupted.

"You led me on with those interested eyes of yours," he retorted. "I had not learned then that that look is quite as apt to mean that you are not listening as that you are. What else did I tell you?"

"That your name was Stephen Ford, and that you were in the lumber business, and how you liked your beefsteak

cooked\_\_\_

"Then it was your fault," he said, "because that is one of the subjects on which I am most reserved. And you—I knew nothing about you when the six days were over except your name, and that I got from the steward."

"Didn't the mystery make me more

interesting?"

"You didn't need any mystery to make you interesting," he said. "Where shall I get the concert seats this year?"

"The same place," said Avis. "At least, the same price. My income has the limits it had last season."

He frowned. "I wish-but there is no use opening that discussion, I sup-

pose."

"Not the slightest. I can't indulge your wish to sit farther forward to the extent of letting you pay for my tickets. I may be wealthy myself another season. I am going to learn how to end my stories."

"You can't do it," he said conclusively. "They will continue to be charming, clever, interesting conundrums like yourself. You cover up your feelings as you do your walls."

"Even if I have to poke holes in

them," Avis said pensively.

After Stephen Ford went home that night, he wrote:

Dear Avis: There is something I want to say to you, but under the circumstances I find it hard to say. Will you let me come up to-morrow?

Avis read it twice with knitted brow. "Dear old Stephen," she said at last. "That is why he had so many complaints to make of my covering up my feelings." She reached for her pen, drawing in her breath with a regretful sigh. "I knew he was in love with

me," she acknowledged to the little mirror in her desk, "but I didn't think he'd find it out so soon," with a whimsical smile into her reflected eyes.

She bit the end of her pen meditatively. "I'll have to write him," she said. "It would never do to have him come up expecting me to say yes."

So Avis wrote:

Dear Stephen: If you mean that you want me to care for you in any way except as a friend, I am so sorry, but I cannot.

Stephen's answer came on the return mail. It read:

My Dear Avis: You did not guess right, but your assurance that you do not care for me makes it much easier for me to say what I intended to—that my very sincere enjoyment of your company is not based on any sentiment other than friendship. You know my views about perfect candor in these matters. I am coming up this evening.

Avis stood in the middle of her best Daghestan and looked at Stephen who leaned against a chair-back for needed support and returned her gaze.

"Scorn of my limitations is in your

glance," he said.

She looked very tall—she had on a trained gown for the furtherance of that effect—and very haughty.

"If you thought I was in love with

you," she began.

"I didn't think that," he protested.

"If you thought there was any danger of my falling in love with you." she repeated, keeping a merciless eye on his embarrassed if dogged countenance, "the only thing for you to do was to let me fall."

"But if I could prevent it?"

A very evident desire to laugh rippled into the exasperation on Miss Peyton's face. Mr. Ford stuck to his colors which were at that moment varying shades of red.

"You know I believe in looking at

things as they are," he said.

"Such an impossible thing to believe in," scornfully. "Nobody ever does see things as they are."

"Because they don't try. They even cover up deliberately—" His eyes followed hers to the soft-hued Bokhara.

"You are so consistent," she scoffed.
"You have no scruples about poking holes in my self-esteem so that your conscience may hang comfortably."
He laughed. "But why should your

He laughed. "But why should your self-esteem suffer?" he protested. "It is simply a matter of our understanding

each other."

"And do you for an instant suppose," she hurried on, "that your rushing in would have made any difference? People fall in love without regard to the sentiment of the other party."

He shook his head. He was very uncomfortable, being in reality a far from conceited young man, but he was not prepared to back down from his

position.

"As long as the element of uncertainty is there, they might," he said, "but with a definite knowledge——"

"What nonsense!" said Avis. "I've a good mind to fall in love with you,

just to prove it."

He looked decidedly startled. "I think you are quite capable of it," he said. "I mean of trying," he put in hurriedly at the second ripple that swept across her face, "but I assure you it will be a failure. The thing is unpsychological. Look at the lovers of history—" He came to a stop and broke into smiling.

Avis had sunk into a chair, her pretty shoulders shaking, the tears in her shining eyes. She was lost in laughter, and Stephen stood looking down at her where she sat, the exquisite shape of her head in relief against the dulled scarlet and brown and gold of her book-shelves, her slender figure relaxed. He looked a long time. It seemed to him suddenly that he had been looking at her for an eternity, and that he wanted another eternity in which to go on looking at her

"You are beautiful, Avis," he said slowly, hardly knowing he had spoken.

She glanced up and drew a slender forefinger across her wet lashes.

"I have never made any effort to conceal the fact," she said.

He frowned. The challenge had

gone out of his blue eyes. They had an astonished, almost awed look.

"It just occurs to me," he said, with a slowness very unlike his usual manner of speech, "that to the eyes of a fool the most obvious things are hidden."

Then he looked at her again in silence for so long that all the laughter flitted away from her face and an embarrassment came upon her.

started to rise.

He put out his hand to stop her. "Avis," he said, "it is only fair for you to know that to me the hem of your gown seems a thing worthy of worship. I suppose I have had the feeling a long time, only I had it in my mind that it was friendship. Avis!" He came nearer and his blue eyes were grown very boyish with the pleading that was in them. "You said you were going to try to care for me. Will you?

He put his hand down almost timidly and touched hers where it lay white and slim on the arm of the chair. He was marveling at the times he had touched it in greeting or farewell without any etherealized electricity taking charge of his entire being.

Avis sat very quiet. Her dark lashes swept her cheeks. She was wondering why she had thought that morning that she was not ready.

"Will you try?" he asked again.

A little smile curved the corners of her red mouth. She turned her slender fingers so that they met his. "If you think it would be psychological," she answered.

"Avis," said Stephen somewhat later, with an air of decided originality, "when did you begin--"

"I don't know, Stephen," she interrupted, "I think it was after I got your letter announcing that you did not care for me."

He held her soft hand against his cheek answering the deep-down laugh-

ter in her eyes.
"I think," he said, "that we have always loved each other ever since the world began."

"How wrong of us to keep it covered up so long!" she said.



# DAWN, AND THE NIGHT HAS FLED

DAWN, and the night has fled. Silver the sky; Pale the great, sleepy stars Watching on high.

Dawn, and the pallid east Flushes to gold As without touch of hands Its gates unfold.

Dawn, and the hooded hills, Shrinking and gray, Shoulder to shoulder stand Waiting the day.

Dawn, and the song of toil Once more I hear, Trampling of many feet Breaks on my ear. BETH SLATER WHITSON.



The extraordinary spring variety of dramatic productions. The opening of the roof-gardens and the hot-weather musical comedy. Theatrical garden-truck, Henry Miller's new departure. "The Wolf" not Eugene Walter's greatest play, but interesting. The versatility of George M. Cohan. "The Yankee Prince" a tremendous success. A new theatrical manager in town—Felix Isman. "The Merry Go Round" a peculiar mixture, but an entertaining summer show



AYS and players are apt to be curious at all times, but the plays we get and the players we get during the early dandelion season are the most extraordinary things in all

the World of Make Believe. They belong to what is correctly styled the spring or garden variety of theatricals -spring because no one knows whence they are sprung and garden because their arrival is simultaneous with that of the gentle onion, pathfinder for a long line of similarly succulent vegetables. Of course the players are in many respects the ones who have been entertaining us throughout the cold months, but somehow they always assume a newly verdant look about the first of May; and that may be what makes them harmonize so exquisitely with the wondrous array of plays which light on Broadway when the real, honest-to-goodness dramatic season commences to wane.

At the outset of that season of the year when New Yorkers and the other inhabitants of this tremendous consequence of Christopher Columbus' praiseworthy ingenuity are busily engaged in putting their ulsters and fur coats away in the moth-balls, there come to life in the metropolis four separate and distinct styles of theatrical enter-tainment. First and foremost are the big amusement parks down by the sea -gigantic pleasure resorts which entertain millions with brass bands, crazy rides, laugh shows, sizzling frankfurters, ballyhoos and surf-bathing. They are at once the most expensive, the most interesting, and the most popular playgrounds in all the country, and their field of endeavor, like Shakespeare's, is not limited to the immediate vicinity of the little town called New York.

With the opening of all the big and little Coney Islands the roof-gardens are dusted off and thrown wide—at a dollar and a half a throw—to the perspiring, panama-hatted populace. And at the same time arrive the two other kinds of warm-weather theatrics—the two which make us think that footlights and gardens are not so different after all.

One is the frothy, hot-weather musical comedy; a tuneful and shapeful jumble of songs, dances and pretty young women which is as different from a midwinter musical show as a peek-aboo shirt-waist is from a bearskin coat. The other is that delicate, bashful, retiring contrapshun, the spring For the first—these musical pieces generally take the form of "reviews" of the season just past—there is a more or less easily discernible reason, but for the average dramatic piece brought to New York at soda-water time there is absolutely no excuse. Where they come from, where they go, how they came to be built, and why they are presented, have for years been questions which have helped to make the population of the metropolis grayheaded.

It is not the purpose of this article to discuss in detail any of the extraordinary plays of this type which have been dumped on Broadway this spring. Life is too short and white paper costs too much. The First Nighter simply wishes to go on record as a man who would like to know whence, how, why, and

whither.

Actors and actresses who have accumulated a little fame and some money in various sections of that devious theatrical thoroughfare known as "the road," but who have not enjoyed a successful metropolitan "run" in years, out-of-town managers with Broadway ambitions, "angels" who think they see in the empty theaters of our biggest city an opportunity to humble the "Syndicate," playwrights who believe they have written the legitimate successors to "The Music Master," "The Lion and the Mouse," "Polly of the Circus," and "Peter Pan"-these are the folk seemingly responsible for this curious collection of theatrical garden-truck. The moment the regular theatrical season commences to wane and the theater spiders begin to play house among the darkened footlights the annual crop of dramatic curios starts for New York Town. And then the life of a dramatic critic becomes

This spring has been like most of its predecessors in most ways. Shakespeare, by Bill Smith the idol of the Pacific Coast, Ibsen interpreted by that talented young Oklahoma symbolist, Miss Agnes Embonpoint—they have been with us as have most of the would-be Charles Kleins, Henry Arthur Joneses, Arthur Wing Pineros and Clyde Fitches of most of the big and little theatrical centers of the country. As in previous years the majority of these plays, players and playwrights have failed quickly and decidedly, and as in the seasons that have gone before, there have been several notable exceptions-several worth-while efforts which have made well-defined dents in the battle-scarred map of Theaterland.

The most noteworthy of these fagend-of-the-season offerings was reviewed in AINSLEE's last month. "The Servant in the House" has made the sensation of the year, and at the present writing is defying the dust, the heat, and the annual exodus to the country and seashore as successfully as is Luna Park or the most enliven-

ing musical comedy.

And following hard on its spectacular triumph comes one of the most interesting theatrical announcements of the season-Henry Miller who produced it has left the Shubert fold, has linked hands with the much-berated but still surviving "Syndicate" and has undertaken to present his remarkable Associate Players at the Savoy Theater in a series of other plays by Charles Rann Kennedy, whose first dramatic work made its author famous in a night. These other plays, each of which Mr. Miller believes to be at least as good as "The Servant in the House." will be produced during the next three sea-It looks as if Kennedy and young Eugene Walter were the dramatic discoveries of the year. Certainly they are the two most interesting writers for the stage that have appeared in New York during the last twelve months.

Eugene Walter's "Paid in Full" brought that direct and dramatically-to-the-point young man into the very center of the theatrical spot-light with what the newspapers are fond of describing as "a single bound." By the

middle of May three companies were presenting it—one at the Astor Theater in New York, one in Chicago, and one

And before the third company had started rehearsals the Shuberts had produced another play by Mr. Walter. "The Wolf," first seen at the Bijou, was subsequently moved to the Lyric which Mr. Sothern had just vacated, and there it was billed noisily as "Eugene Walter's Greatest Play," a piece of superlative description which offers a striking example of what will some day come to be known as theatrical license. In this particular instance "theatrical license" means unwarranted exaggera-"The Wolf" is not Mr. Walter's greatest play, but it is interesting-decidedly interesting. Whatever may be the fate of his future writings for the stage you and I may rest assured that they will at least be interesting. chances are that they will be much more than that, for he is in many respects the most dramatic and virile of all our young native dramatists.

"The Wolf" is an illogical melodrama dealing with the Canadian Hudson Bay country and introducing three phases of life in the lonely Northwest. Jules Beaubien (William Courtenay), a young French-Canadian, and Ba'tiste Le Grand (Sheridan Block), a slaving, trapping, hunting admirer, have vowed to kill an unknown American engineer who is responsible for the downfall and death of a half-breed girl, Annette, who once upon a time occupied the interesting relationship of half-sister to Jules and sweetheart to Ba'tiste. Ouite naturally enough they meet him in the person of William MacDonald (Walter Hale), a devilish, Don Juan young chap who is superintending the building of a railway through the unin-habited interior. Why they don't kill him on sight is one of the many unanswered puzzles in "The Wolf.

When the play opens MacDonald with his assistant, George Huntley (George Probert), is making his headquarters in the house of Andrew Mc-Tavish (Thomas Findlay), a Scotch settler; and right at the start-off we get a glimpse of the engineer worming his way into the unsophisticated heart of Hilda, the old Scotchman's only daughter. Now, Jules, who is going to revenge his sister's death, loves Hilda and he, not unnaturally, decides to stop the wily MacDonald before he has gone too far. Young Huntley, who has been with the engineer five years and is perfectly acquainted with his superior's proclivities, suddenly decides to help Jules and Ba'tiste; so, long before the mix-up finally takes place, we have three men lined up against one.

Where is the father all this time, you ask? Ah, there is another peculiar point in the story. The old Scotchman is a bit daffy. Eighteen years before he had married a poor, down-trodden woman of the streets, a flaxen-haired Swede, and a year later Hilda was Then the mother suffered a lapse of morals and ran away with another man, That's what made old McTavish crazy, and his mental aberration has taken the form of a maniacal hatred of his daughter, all other women, and the nation of Swedes. You would think, wouldn't you, that a father left alone with a sweet and lovable daughter would lavish on her at least a part of the affection which he had misplaced on the mother? He doesn't, and this is a very good reason for knowing that he is mentally unbalanced.

Well, MacDonald, who has a wife and children back in the States, tells the girl that she must run away with him, an announcement which she receives with a horrified gaze not at all indicative of even passing affection. And he explains it all to the old man by telling him that he may be well rid of the girl by letting her go to New York and live with his-MacDonald's -beautiful white-haired old Scotch mother who is a Presbyterian and simply dotes on nice young girls. The ancient Scotchman thinks it a great idea and agrees. And Jules overhears the whole rotten story, bursts into the room, makes an awful scene, grabs the girl and, accompanied by the faithful Ba'tiste and the jocose Huntley, exits into the wilderness.

And that very night Jules sends the girl with his two companions down the river in a canoe while he waits in the dark for MacDonald. You must take your hat off to MacDonald for one thing at least. He liked the girl well enough to stick on her trail. Single-handed he follows the young lady and her small army of protectors, and in the dark he finally runs across the retreating avenger.

Fight? Well, I should say they do! All over the stage, hand to hand, with knives! And finally *Jules* gets his man. You hear a thud and then a match is struck. On the forest floor by the thin light of the flame you see a dead engineer, and standing over him the living

and victorious Jules.

Then the curtain falls and you presume the French-Canadian marries *Hilda*, who a little while ago was willing enough to marry *MacDonald*. What happens to the ancient father? No one knows. Perhaps he is up in the woods yet, railing against women in general and Swedes in particular.

Bad characterization is the fault of "The Wolf." Young Huntley, a seemingly well-bred chap, supplies all the comedy of the piece by making fun of old McTavish's white hair. Hilda, as played by Ida Conquest, is a colorless young woman with a horror-struck face. She is hardly reason enough for all the trouble. The two things in the play deserving of most appreciation are William Courtenay and Sheridan Block. Both play with enthusiasm, art and brains. And though it is doubtful if any French-Canadian would wait so long for revenge, or if any man would bring his mother's name into a low attempt to ruin a girl, or if any sober father would hate his good and motherless daughter, or if any decent chap of twenty would find amusement in calling a white-haired old man "Santa Claus," you will nevertheless admit that the play has a dramatic grip and keeps you interested-particularly the fight in the dark. But it isn't Eugene Walter's best play.

George M. Cohan is in many respects the most interesting figure in American musical-comedy circles. What Charles Hoyt was to the theater a generation ago he is to the playhouse today. He claims nothing save the right to win money and popularity by wearing a cap and bells, and he succeeds. He is the most efficient, the most famous, the best liked, and the most successful man of his years on the English-speaking stage. He has written more musical comedy "hits" than any other living American. He is the best acrobatic dancer in our country. He is as well known as a lyricist as he is as a composer. He writes his own plays. He writes his own lyrics. He writes his own music. He finances his own pieces. He stages them. He plays them. We have nothing else like him, and regardless of what you think of his musical or dramatic standards you must, if you have any sort of a sense of appreciation, admit that results tell and, gaged by results, George M. Cohan, a youngster of twenty-nine, is, next to Victor Herbert, the greatest light-opera composer America possesses.

His newest piece, "The Yankee Prince," is the best thing he has ever done. Not that there is any one song which will outrival some of his most popular compositions of the past, but the piece as a whole shows a distinct advance over "Little Johnny Jones," "George Washington, Junior," "The Governor's Son," "Forty-five Minutes from Broadway," and all his other stage writings. It claims to be nothing more than a good evening's amusement, and the fact that it has played to "capacity" houses ever since it came to the Knickerbocker proves that it is exactly what it claims to be.

In "The Yankee Prince" the Four Cohans—father, mother, sister, and brother—are again brought together. An extraordinary family of entertainers this. Besides the singing and dancing of George and his sister Josephine, the play boasts the services of Tom Lewis in a screamingly funny impersonation of an always tipsy promoter of pugilism on a visit to Windsor Castle; Jack Gardner, an excellent young sing-

ing comedian; Estelle Wentworth, a well-known comic-opera soprano: Stella Hammerstein, daughter of the famous grand opera impresario; Sam J. Ryan, for many years a "side-partner" of Mr. Lewis and Frank Hollins, an expert in the delineation of "silly ass" Englishmen. The story of the play? Who ever heard of writing out the story of a summer-time musical

comedy!

There is a new theatrical manager in town. Felix Isman for more than a decade has been a "backer" of theatrical pieces, but never until this year has he ventured to step to the front and stand alone as a producing manager with his relationship to his plays an open secret. His first enterprise under the new order of things is "The Merry Go Round," which was produced as a hot-weather show at the Circle Theater under the joint management of Isman and Gus Edwards, a well-known song writer.

Later, William Faversham expects to appear at Daly's in a repertory of plays under the Isman banner. And in the fall the celebrated Scotch comedian, Harry Lauder, will receive a colossal salary when he joins the Circle Company in a new musical comedy.

"The Merry Go Round" is a peculiar mixture of two or three well-known vaudeville "acts" and a lot of pretty girls in a constantly changing state of dress and undress. Dainty Mabel Hite, who is an excellent though littleknown-in-New York comedienne, is the principal feature of the piece, which has to do with farm life, bohemian Paris, and all manner of things which are only to be seen in Musical-Comedy Land. James J. Morton, with his funny question-and-answer monologue, is the leading comedian, and most of the laughs are divided between him and slender Miss Hite. But the girlswell, every one knows what chorus

girls are and what can be done with a stageful of them-all togged out in dresses which no young woman-not even a chorus girl-would dare wear anywhere save in the glare of the footlights. They dance and they singsing to the boxes and sing in the boxes -and cut all the capers that chorus girls are or should be allowed to cut. Some of their costumes are sufficiently startling to make staid old Broadway blink his eyes in something akin to amazement, but that, I guess, is what hot-weather musical comedies and chorus girls are for, so it does not make so very much difference. Summer-time, you know, is not like wintertime, and theatricals have a way of changing with the mercury in the thermometer.

The other plays? I draw a curtain over them. They will be dead and forgotten before this month's AINSLEE'S reaches you, and there is no reason in pummeling a dead thing. Wolf," "The Yankee Prince," and "The Merry Go Round" are the only novelties of the month which stand any chance of coming up smiling after our panamas are put in cold storage next

The roof-gardens and Coney Island are the big novelties now because people like to be cool while they laugh. Luna Park, resplendent with three carloads of new paint, ten thousand flags, and all sorts of improvements and new attractions, is the chief Mecca of the townful of natives and visitors. roof-gardens have vaudeville shows, and they hardly crave the serious attention of a serious First Nighter. But they and the musical comedies and old Coney represent the tastes of summer New York and her millions of visitors from about the country. The spring or garden variety of drama does not, and for that everybody should be thankful.



# FOR Archibald Lowery Sessions

A new serial, by May Sinclair, in Ainslee's. The August number of especial interest to midsummer readers. "The Primadonna," by F. Marion Crawford, remarkable for its inconsistencies. Alice Brown's "Rose McLeod" is a tale of very uneven quality. Headon Hill in "The Epsom Mystery" has produced a story of plot, without much regard to anything else. In "The Stuff of a Man," by Katharine Evans Blake, the race question plays a rather important part. Ada Woodruff Anderson's first book, "The Heart of the Great Firs," a most creditable effort. "Purple and Homespun," by Samuel M. Gardenhire, lacking in every essential of a good novel. Anthony Hope's "Love's Logic" very entertaining and in the author's best vein. "The Duchess of Dreams," by Edith Macvane, full of interest and well worth reading. Rather an amusing tale is "My Lost Duchess," by Jesse Lynch Williams



N this July number of AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE there is, among other features all of which are of special interest, one at least which ought to attract widespread attention.

Since the publication of "The Divine Fire," a new story by Miss May Sinclair has become a matter of considerable importance. This magazine has, as its readers remember, had the good fortune to have two serial stories from her pen, and in this number we are giving to the public the first chapters of her latest piece of work, and, making due allowance for the type, it is doubtless her best.

In literary excellence it represents Miss Sinclair at her very best, and those who have read "Mr. and Mrs. Nevil Tyson" know what that best is. As a story pure and simple, aside from the question of workmanship and technical detail, which hardly impress those who read stories for the sake of the story, little criticism is possible. It possesses originality, to a rather startling degree perhaps, strength and truthfulness of

characterization, a great deal of dramatic strength in its most important situations, a quality creating suspense and even anxiety as to the outcome, in this way producing an almost breathless interest from the beginning up to the climax.

"The Immortal Moment" may not be what some people call an epoch-making story, but it possesses a degree of human interest that is seldom found in current fiction.

Another item of interest is a new story by O. Henry, called "Buried Treasure." It is somewhat different from the type of his more recent tales, but it displays all of his characteristic humor and insight.

The August number, of which we can only say a few words, will have some features that will make a special appeal to midsummer readers. Miss Sinclair's story will, of course, be continued, and the second instalment will carry a far deeper interest than such an instalment usually does.

The complete novel will be a story with a Western atmosphere, entitled "Flower o' Sagebrush." Miss Miriam Michelson is the author of it, and it hardly needs further mention than to recall her books, "In the Bishop's Carriage"—which, by the way, first appeared as a short story in AINSLEE'S—"The Madigans" and "Anthony Overman." Her latest story, "Flower o' Sagebrush," is not excelled by anything she has previously done, for it shows, as it ought, a maturer craftsmanship, greater originality of plot and action, and a higher degree of dramatic power.

There will also be some stirring short stories of even greater variety than usual.

A. A. A.

The title-page of "The Primadonna," by F. Marion Crawford, published by the Macmillan Company, carries the announcement that the story is a sequel to "Fair Margaret." The statement is somewhat misleading for, though Margaret Donne does appear, with the curious Logotheti, in the pages of the new book and though her professional career as an operatic star seems now to be well established, it is not at all the sort of tale that one was led to expect from the reading of its predecessor.

These two characters are practically the only ones whose acquaintance we made in "Fair Margaret." Lushington, it is true, has a part, but it is insignificant; in fact, his entrance is made substantially as a preliminary to a rather ignominious exit and we only recognize

him by his name.

"The Primadonna" is hardly anything more than the tale of a murder mystery of which Mr. Van Torp, introduced as a financial magnate, is the hero. The book seems to us remarkable for its inconsistencies. It shows Van Torp, for instance, in one light in the beginning and in an entirely different one toward the end. It throws over his dealings with Lady Maud an atmosphere of somewhat scandalous mystery which is later shown to be wholly uncalled for.

The murder of the girl in the operahouse turns out to be a purposeless crime, committed under circumstances which make it far from plausible.

Nevertheless it has a certain interest

due to the complications following the events in the opera-house detailed in the first chapter, which are told in a way calculated to arrest attention.

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Miss Alice Brown's new book, "Rose McLeod," published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co., is a story of very uneven quality. In some particulars it is of extraordinary excellence and in others it is disappointing. It is, however, due to Miss Brown to say that as a whole her work is much above the average.

She has given us two characters in Madame Fulton and Electra which are fresh, original, vital, and true to life, and they in themselves are a sufficient vindication of her work. They are both distinctly New England types, with which, of course, the author is presumably on terms of intimacy, representing, in Electra on the one hand, the survival of the Puritan conscience which supplies rigid standards of life for others, and in Madame Fulton, on the other, the revolt of a strong personality against the meddlesome regulation of twentieth century Puritanism.

Osmond and Peter are rather vaguely and indefinitely pictured; one hardly knows what sort of men they are or what to expect of them. Rose McLeod herself, with some rather poignant experiences in the past, which should have developed in her a degree of worldly knowledge, is not very convincing as a naïve young girl, in spite of her un-

doubted charm.

The character of Markham McLeod just misses a strength of portrayal which might have made him a great creation.

One effect of the book is to raise a suspicion in the mind of the reader as to Miss Brown's entire sympathy either with the New England conscience or with the professional uplifter of humanity.

Headon Hill has a characteristic story in "The Epsom Mystery," published by R. F. Fenno & Co. It is a story of

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plot, written without much regard for anything else, and as such it will doubtless answer its purpose by meeting the

The tale grows out of the overweening ambition of Mr. Leopold Tannadyce, a money-lender of London, to be something more in the world than a mere money-lender. From this is developed a series of complications that gets to be rather bewildering, but out of it all one can gather that the aim of Mr. Tannadyce is to get possession of the ancestral acres of Sir Charles Roy-

lance, one of his victims.

Sir Charles hopes to save himself from the clutches of his creditors by winning a horse-race, and he finally triumphs in spite of the plotting of his enemy. If there were not something more than this mere outline, of course there could not be a book of 318 pages about it, and therefore the author has filled up the outline with a mass of incident more or less exciting and more or less improbable.

It needs only to be added that Mr. Tannadyce attempts not only to ruin Sir Charles but to steal away his sweetheart, Nance Beauchamp, so that the story is not without its "love-interest."

The race question plays a more or less important part in Katharine Evans Blake's story, "The Stuff of a Man," published by the Bobbs-Merrill Com-

The scene of the story is laid in southern Indiana, the site of certain property inherited by a young Ken-"young, darkly handsome, slight and graceful, with the Southerner's placidity of poise." Clay Hardesty is this young man's name, and when we are introduced to him we find him chafing over the conditions imposed upon his inheritance by the will of his aunt to whom the property belonged. He is expected to cooperate with a local philanthropist, one Philo Dorsey, in the elevation of the negro tenants and finds at the outset that his Southern training and prejudices are likely to be outraged.

Nevertheless the persuasiveness of Dorsey, who is a sort of miniature Abraham Lincoln, the charm of Miss Damoris, who occupies a strategical position as the granddaughter both of Dorsey and his bitterest opponent, Judge Ochiltree, and his own observations of the results of a "nigger-hunt," produce their effect and he is finally convinced, simultaneously, of the desirability of Damoris and the capabilities of the negro.

Hardesty is not the strenuous character of the story; he is rather an observer of the struggle between Dorsey and Judge Ochiltree, but as he comes to Indiana to observe it would not be fair to criticize him for lack of enter-

prise.

One of the incidents in the book is an attempted lynching of an innocent negro.

"The Heart of the Red Firs" is the first book of Ada Woodruff Anderson and is published by Little, Brown & Co.

· Mrs. Anderson has been an occasional contributor of short stories to AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE, and this novel, like her shorter work, is "a story of the Pacific Northwest."

It is, on the whole, a very good story, obviously written with an intimate knowledge of the scenes it describes and of the characters, customs and activities belonging to the districts bordering on Puget Sound.

It is, in substance, the love-story of Paul Forrest and Alice Hunter, but both of them, naturally, are obliged to go through numerous more or less unpleasant experiences before the consumma-

tion is reached.

The machinations of Stratton and the weakness of Phil Kingsley make most of the trouble, not only for Paul and Alice, but at one time or another for most of the other characters, but events dispose of them both satisfactorily.

There are some good situations in the story, notably the encounter on the mountain between Forrest and Stratton and the unexpected dénouement.

The construction of the story is a little faulty in some particulars, but not enough to impair its interest or to qualify the verdict that, as Mrs. Anderson's first book, it is a most creditable effort.

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"Purple and Homespun" is the title of a new novel by Samuel M. Gardenhire, published by Harper & Bros.

It is not a book to commend itself especially either to the critic or the general reader because it lacks coherence of plot, literary style, convincing characterization, unity of purpose, and in-

terest.

So far as can be gathered from a perusal of the story it is intended, as much as anything, as a sort of tract upon current questions involving the interests of capital and labor and their political bearing, with the inevitable attempt to make a love-story of it. Its beginning is rather promising, the opening chapter introducing the reader into the President's office in the White House where an interview upon wholly personal topics is in progress between his excellency and Marshall Treemon, a newly elected senator from a Western State. The President urges the senator to press his suit for the hand of the niece of the British ambassador, Lady Victoria Wemyss.

The scene is shifted thence, in a rather irresponsible fashion, to the East Side of New York, and the senator again appears among its denizens, taking his first lesson in Socialism. Afterward the reader is taken with the senator to Lady Victoria's country home in England where he finds that he is too late. Washington, London, and New York—East Side and Fifth Avenue—are shown in rapid succession, and the rather wooden figures which pass for characters move and talk as such figures naturally might.

The tale must, of course, have its Wall Street magnates, its merger and its denunciation of trusts on the one hand, and the Sherman law on the other. Altogether it is rather dreary

reading.

A volume of fifteen short stories by Anthony Hope is "Love's Logic," published by the McClure Company.

In spite of the title of the book, the stories are not all of them love-stories, and those that are not have fully as much interest as the others.

It is unnecessary to say that they are well written, for Mr. Hope is master of his craft and has too much regard for his art to make anything public but that upon which he has expended his best effort.

There is variety enough to suit different tastes, but we think that anybody who takes the book up at all ought to read "Miss Gladwin's Chance," "Prudence and the Bishop," "Slim Fingered Jim," and "The Opened Door." These are novel, convincing, and interesting.

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Miss Edith Macvane's first book, "The Duchess of Dreams," has just been published by the J. B. Lippincott Company

It is a story of high life, with a Newport background, but it has a leaven of adventure which makes it quite a different type of novel from the stereotyped society story. Miss Macvane has not hesitated to use material which might be objected to as more or less improbable, but she has done it so skilfully that interest in the story as a story makes one forget whether or not any of the episodes or situations conform to facts in real life.

The reader gets over, at the very beginning of the book, whatever difficulties he may have as to probabilities, for immediately following the introduction of Angélique Hooper she takes up the rôle of the Grand Duchess Varvara, whom Mrs. Rumbold is momentarily expecting as her guest at Miss Hooper's her Newport villa. début having been successfully accomplished, it is incumbent upon her to sustain her part. Her difficulties, arising from the constant danger of discovery, are what give the book in large measure its special interest. Her tact and adaptibility enable her to overcome them and to make a permanent impression on the heart of the most desirable man of the season, Jack Borridaile.

Miss Macvane has written a good story, full of interest and well worth reading, and what is perhaps more significant has shown that she is capable of still better work.

"A vivid picture of the Fifth Avenue phase of New York life" is what "My Lost Duchess," by Jesse Lynch Williams, is described to be by its publishers, the Century Company.

It is rather an amusing tale dealing chiefly with the sentimentality of the young man who tells it—and who is known, by the way, only as Nick—beginning with his observation, from his club-window, of a pretty girl, who takes her walks on the avenue.

Nick is one of the communicative kind who likes to tell all he knows, chiefly about himself, and he tells a good many rather silly things, and if it weren't for the fact that Hulda Rutherford is really a sensible girl—though she suffers sometimes because of the manner in which her character is drawn—we would have less patience with him.

Torresdale, his artist friend—and considering that he is an artist, in a story, he is a pretty decent chap—has a good deal of fun at Nick's expense, and in spite of his appearance of double-dealing it seems, at the end, as

though he had been helping all the time to bring about Nick's happiness.

Though it is announced as a story of Fifth Avenue a good part of the action is remote from that thorough-fare, in fact, about the only excuse for such a designation is to inform the reader that Nick is a member of a Fifth Avenue club.

# Important New Books.

"R. J.'s Mother and Some Other People," Margaret Deland, Harper & Bros. "Some Ladies in Haste," Robert W.

Chambers, D. Appleton & Co.

"The Golden Rose," Amélie Rives, Harper & Bros.
"The Girl and the Game," Jesse Lynch

"The Girl and the Game," Jesse Lynch Williams, Charles Scribner's Sons. "The Post Girl," Edward C. Booth, Century Co.

"Gleam o' Dawn," Arthur Goodrich, D. Appleton & Co.

"Delilah of the Snows," Harold Bindloss, F. A. Stokes Co. "The Daughter," Constance Smedley, Moffat, Vard & Co.

fat, Yard & Co.
"The Spanish Jade," Maurice Hewlett,
Doubleday, Page & Co.
"The Schoolmaster," Arthur C. Benson,

G. P. Putnam's Sons.
"The Master Influence," Thomas McKean,

J. B. Lippincott Co.
"The Breaking in of a Yachtsman's Wife,"
Mary Heaton Vorse, Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

"The Chaperon," C. N. and A. M. Williamson, McClure Co.

"The Half Smart Set," Anonymous, F. A. Stokes Co.

"The Captain's Wife," John-Lloyd, Mitchell Kennerley.





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# with a dash of lemon—(and a little cream if you like)

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It feels good to get free from the coffee "grip," and it's like a continuous frolic to be perfectly well.

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In just a short while, your washer will pay for itself this way. Then—the washer is yours and all it saves is yours.

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# AINSLEE'S FOR AUGUST

"THE MAGAZINE THAT ENTERTAINS"

The August number of AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE will contain as it's leading feature the second instalment of

# MAY SINCLAIR'S

last book. The opening chapters in the July number have introduced Kitty Tailleur to the readers, and the intimations, conveyed by her character and surroundings, of the complications to come promise a fulfilment of the dramatic intensity of the climax.

The complete novel in the July number is the work of the author of "In the Bishop's Carriage."

# MIRIAM MICHELSON

has laid the scene of this new story, "Flower o' Sagebrush," in the West, a region which she knows thoroughly, and with her broad knowledge of human nature she has made an intensely interesting story. It is one of action and not of the analytical and psychological type.

Among the short stories is one of the "Jimmie" stories by MARY H. VORSE, called "ONE DAY OF JIMMIE," a good representative of the series of child humor tales.

An unusually strong story is one by a new author, ANGELA MORGAN; it is called "The Protest," and it is written with the strength and skill of a veteran and has the freshness and originality of enthusiastic youth.

All of the other short stories are of the highest quality. They are by ROY NORTON, CHARLES NEVILLE BUCK, DOUGLAS Z. DOTY, KELLOGG DURLAND, OWEN OLIVER, JANE W. GUTHRIE, and MARY IMLAY TAYLOR.

RUPERT HUGHES will have an article on "The Clue to the Best Music," supplementing his previous article on mechanical piano playing.

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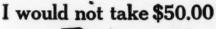
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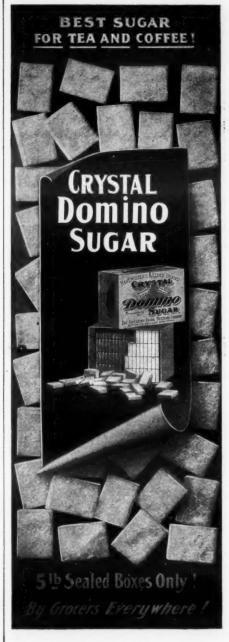
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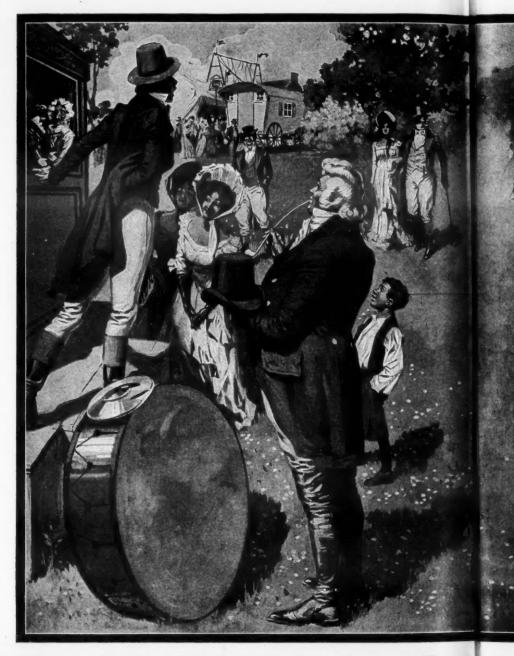
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# **AUGUST POPULAR MAGAZINE**

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A short time ago a conflict of arms between the United States and Japan was confidently predicted. While hostilities did not become open, there was more or less diplomatic hurry-scurrying on the part of both nations. The present highly interesting narrative tells about a most thrilling portion of it. The subject is one which promises all sorts of interesting happenings, and this promise is fulfilled by the author in the ingenious way that readers of THE POPULAR have become accustomed to expect from him. The complications that arise keep the reader guessing as to the outcome of events until the last page.

# A GREAT "TOMMY WILLIAMS" STORY

By J. KENILWORTH EGERTON Author of "The Man With the Paw," Etc.

Le Garde, chief of the French secret police, Tommy Williams, "artist and jackass," and his friend who tells the story here fall in with another of those baffling mysteries that perplex them to the limit. The cape from which the story takes its title rivals the magic carpet of the Arabian Nights in respect to the exciting adventures that accompany it. This is the first instalment—a big slice—of a two-part story.

### A NEW AND INTERESTING SORT OF DETECTIVE STORY

### THE LONG OF COINCIDENCE By GEORGE STEELE

This is a new sort of detective story, and is doubly absorbing by reason of its uncommon merit and its unusual novelty. There's "somethin' doin'" here from start to finish—and what is done is very much worth while reading about.

### THE WADDY

By W. B. M. FERGUSON

## IN THE BLACK NIGHT

By GEORGE RANDOLPH CHESTER Here are two stories with widely different settings that "go to the right spot" in the mind and heart of the reader. While the story of incident and adventure is highly interesting, stories meredy of action do not as a rule make as strong an impression as those that make the reader feel as well. The former titillate the mind, the latter class also clutch at the heart. While there is plenty of action in both these stories, there is something more—and it is just that "little more" that sets them apart from and above the average magazine tale.

### OTHER FEATURES FOR AUGUST

THE MANAGEMENT OF THE ANNEX SHAFT, A mining tale of an unusual sort-other worth-while things besides mining. THE GIRL AND THE BANDIT,
How Jack Bellamy, Lawbreaker, gives a bunch of rustlers the ha-ha. - B. M. Bower AS BETWEEN McCANTY AND FERGUSON, -Hugh Pendexter A humorous story in which a ladder plays a prominent part.

HEARTS AND DIAMONDS. Francis Whitlock The conclusion of this two-part "Lost Legion" story is very exciting.

A PART OF THE GAME,

An interesting tale of the turf—what's the best place for a man who's broke? Allan Taylor

THE WILD MAN OF JERSEY, Ralph D. Paine The farther this serial goes the better it gets, both in humor and interest. HIS LONE DEFENSE - -Roy Norton

A story of adventure in the West, full of stirring incident.

- T. Jenkins Hains How would you like to be shipwrecked on a desert island with a crowd of counterfeiters? THE SILVER-LEGS, Bertrand W. Sincialr The cattle were caught "with the goods on them."

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What I did for myself I have done since then for 200,000 others. But the help which I got cost me years of close application. It costs anyone else just five dollars.

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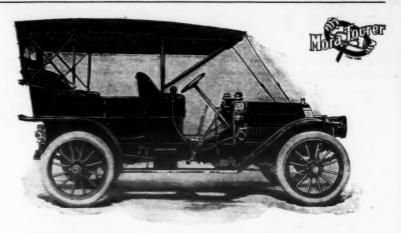


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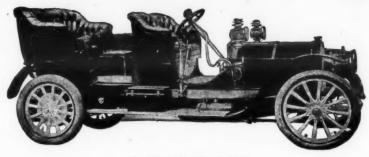
¶ Nickel steel is used throughout. Imported P. & S. ball bearings used exclusively. All models equipped with Bosch high tension magnetos. Double and single frames of nickel steel. Drop-forged I beam, nickel steel front axle—four-speed selective type. Sliding gear transmissions with direct drive on third speed. Multiple disc clutches in all models. All brakes of expanding type and on rear wheels bolted to "buldge" spokes. All brakes equalized and enclosed in dust-proof cases. Universal joints on all steering connections. All types shaft driven and all moving parts inclosed in dust-proof cases.

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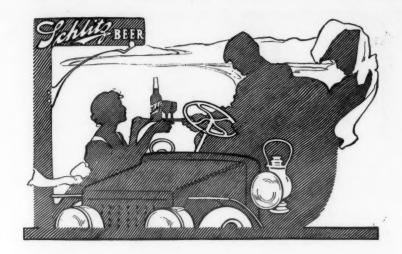
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